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No. 951

5586 DECEMBER 21, 1923

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FAME AND FORTUNE

STORIES OF BOYS WEEKLY. WHO MAKE MONEY.

THE WAY TO SUCCESS; OR, THE BOY WHO GOT THERE.

By A SELF-MADE MAN
AND OTHER STORIES



The flames were already reaching for them. He tied the rope securely around his waist, stepped out on the sill, and measured with his eye the distance he proposed to jump. Then, nerving himself for the effort, he leaped upward.

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FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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No. 951

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 21, 1923

Price 5 cents

THE WAY TO SUCCESS

OR, THE BOY WHO GOT THERE

By A SELF-MADE MAN

Conditions Under Which He Lives.

"Supper is ready, Jack," said a pleasant-faced little woman of perhaps five-and-thirty years, standing in the kitchen doorway of a small, neat-looking farmhouse, to a strong and good-looking boy who had just driven a light wagon into the yard.

"All right, auntie," replied the boy, in the cheery tone habitual with him, "I'll be ready just as soon as I put the horse in the stable."

The lad continued on to the barn, unharnessed the animal, and led her to her stall. Then he went to the wagon, took out an armful of packages, crossed the yard and entered the house.

Jack Frost was an orphan and just sixteen years of age. Born and educated in the East, the sudden and tragic death of both his parents in a steamboat disaster on Long Island Sound threw him, on the eve of his fifteen birthday, practically penniless upon his own resources. In this strait he gladly accepted an invitation from his mother's only sister, Lucy, who, years before, married an enterprising man named Frank Harper, and moved out West, to come to Wisconsin and make their farm his home. He had been there but a couple of months, and was fast learning to make himself useful, when Mr. Harper caught a severe cold, which developed into pneumonia and carried him to his grave.

In this emergency Jack came to the front, and proved himself a bulwark of strength and consolation to his bereaved aunt. With a degree of confidence unusual in one so young, he took the management of the farm entirely upon his young shoulders, hired a competent and trustworthy assistant, and, much to the surprise of the neighboring agriculturists, carried the work on in as good shape as it had ever been conducted by Mr. Harper. The property was located on a shallow stream, one of the tributaries of the Chippewa River, in the western part of Wisconsin, and the chief product of the farm, some two thousand bushels of wheat, had just been harvested. Mrs. Harper largely depended on this crop to pay off a two-thousand-dollar mortgage owing to one Nathan Plunkett, the postmaster and a prosperous storekeeper of Eden, the nearest town, which was situated five miles distant, at the junc-

tion of the Chippewa River and the stream which flowed by the farm.

"I had a visitor this afternoon, Jack," said his aunt, after the hired man had left the table to attend to his chores around the barn.

"Who was it, auntie?" he asked, curiously.

"Nathan Plunkett."

A cloud gathered on the boy's brow, for he didn't like Mr. Plunkett for a cent, nor, we may say, did the Eden storekeeper regard Jack Frost with a friendly eye. Mr. Plunkett was a widower of about fifty, and had a son named Felix, who in many ways was very much like his father. For some reason not quite clear to Jack Frost, the post-master's son entertained a strong dislike for him, and never failed to show it when the two boys met.

"What did he want?" asked Jack, a bit brusquely, when Mrs. Harper named her visitor.

"He wanted to know if we had finished harvesting our wheat."

"Oh, he did?"

"Yes. I told him we had it all housed in our big barn."

"He seems to be very much interested in our affairs," replied the boy, sarcastically.

"He wants to buy it."

"Wants to buy it?"

"He offered me seventy-five cents a bushel for it as it stands, cash."

"Why, auntie, wheat is selling for a dollar, and is expected to go still higher."

"But it must be delivered at Chicago, St. Louis or some other grain center to realize that. When you come to figure at the expense of getting it down to Eden, the nearest point on the railroad, and then add freight rates and commission charges, it will make quite a hole in the difference."

"I admit all that, auntie, but Mr. Plunkett wouldn't make you an offer if he didn't see his way clear to making a good profit on the transaction."

"I dare say that is true, Jack."

"Either he has found out in some way that wheat has just gone up a point or two, or is about to do so, or else there is something in the background."

"What could be in the background?"

"I am sure I couldn't tell you, auntie, as I'm not a mind-reader. You ought to know Mr. Plunkett better than I."

"I wish I didn't know him quite as well as I do."

"He comes around here often enough. Of course, it's none of my business. He doesn't come to see me."

"He comes to see me, I regret to say," replied Mrs. Harper, with a troubled look.

"I don't see why the fact that he holds a mortgage on this place for two thousand dollars makes it necessary that he should be so much in evidence. The farm isn't going to run away."

"It isn't the mortgage that brings him here. That is amply secured by this property. The farm was appraised at four thousand dollars when Frank borrowed the money of him three years ago. It is easily worth five thousand dollars to-day."

"All of that, auntie," replied Jack, nodding his head positively. "I heard Mr. Greene, who owns the place adjoining on the east, you know, say so, and he has a pretty clear idea of the value of property in this neighborhood."

"I can well believe that," Mrs. Harper answered. "Now, Jack, there is no reason why I should keep anything from you. You have been a son and a protector to me ever since Frank died." Her voice broke in a sob, and her handsome eyes filled with tears. "I don't really know what I should have done without you."

"I have done the best I could for you, Aunt Lucy," the boy said earnestly, rising, putting his arms protectingly about her, and kissing her gently on the cheek.

"You have done nobly, dear," she replied, drawing his head down and imprinting a kiss on his forehead. "How shall I ever thank you enough?"

"I don't want you to thank me, auntie. I am only doing my duty to you. You may depend that I will continue to do that as long as I remain with you."

"I hope that will be a long time, Jack," she said, with a caress.

"I hope so, too, auntie."

"As I was going to say, I have no wish to have any secrets from you, so I want to explain the real cause of Mr. Plunkett's visits. He wants to marry me."

"Marry—you!" gasped the boy, staring back in the greatest amazement.

"Yes, Jack. He had the assurance last week to ask me to be his wife."

"Great Caesar! And what did you say to him?"

"I was dumfounded."

"I should think you would be."

"I told him, in great indignation, that he ought to be ashamed to make such a proposal to me when he knew my dear husband had not been a year in his grave."

"And what did he say to that?"

"He said that was a very foolish decision. That I could not expect to carry on this farm successfully as matter stood."

"Ho!" exclaimed Jack. "You might have told him that the farm was thriving without any outside assistance."

"I did. I told him you were conducting the place to my entire satisfaction."

"What did he say to that?"

"He said that my assertion was ridiculous. That you were a mere boy, without agricultural experience. That you were bound to run the farm into the ground, involve me in financial embarrassments, and in the end cause me to lose the property."

"Very kind of him," laughed the boy. "I guess, on the contrary, I've harvested a crop of wheat that will relieve you of the embarrassment of owing Mr. Plunkett the sum of two thousand dollars."

"I told him so very plainly."

"I'll bet he didn't like it."

"He certainly did not, for he laughed in an unpleasant way, and remarked that there was many a slip between the cup and the lip."

"What did he mean by that?" asked the boy, quickly.

"I am sure I don't know, Jack."

"Nothing good, I'll bet," replied the young farmer, soberly and thoughtfully.

"I told him I had to consult you before I could give him an answer."

"I'll wager he didn't like that, either," chuckled Jack.

"I know he didn't from the expression of his face," said Mrs. Harper. "He smiled unpleasantly—I didn't like his smile, Jack, for there seemed to be something menacing behind it—and replied that I would send him word. Then he took his leave, but I saw him talking to John in the yard, and afterward they both went to the big barn."

"Wanted to see how much wheat we really had, eh?"

"I presume so."

"I have no doubt that he is fully satisfied we have enough to loosen his grip on the farm. Do you know, auntie, it has been my opinion from the start that he figured on getting possession of this place through foreclosure proceedings. That is, ever since Uncle Frank died. He did not believe you would be able to run the farm successfully this year, especially as luck was against Uncle Frank the last two years or more. Besides, no one expected wheat would fetch more than fifty cents a bushel, or sixty at the most, which has been about the figure for the past five years. But Jordan, the great Chicago Board of Trade operator, is working to corner the product, and that has sent the price of grain soaring. It is hardly likely that he will succeed, though they say the people supporting him are worth millions. Were he successful, it would mean from \$1.50 to \$2 wheat, something unprecedented for the farmer, but rather hard on the consumer—the poor, particularly."

"Yes. Frank never dreamed of getting a dollar for this year's wheat," said Mrs. Harper, mournfully. "He counted on paying about one-half of the mortgage and getting a renewal for another year. He believed there would be no difficulty in making such arrangements, as the security had increased twenty per cent. in value."

"Well, I have very little confidence in Mr. Plunkett. I wouldn't trust him any further than I can see him. I am fully satisfied that he has been counting on becoming the owner of this farm at a bargain. He is known as a hard man to deal with when the advantage is on his side. That's his record in Eden. I hadn't been a month

in the county before I heard enough about him to fill a book."

"I hope he won't come here again until the mortgage is due and he comes for his money," said Mrs. Harper.

"You don't hope it any more than I do, for he looks decidedly out of place in this neighborhood, and his room is better than his company. Besides, I don't want you to be annoyed by his unwelcome attentions."

"I certainly told him in unmistakable language that there wasn't the least chance that I should reconsider my stand in respect to his proposal of marriage."

"I am glad you made that plain to him, auntie. He had an awful nerve to think you would accept the attentions of any man so soon after Uncle Frank's death."

"But what about selling the wheat, Jack? You know, I shall need the money in a month to settle the mortgage."

"If you will confide the matter to my judgment, auntie, I think you will find that you will come out all right. I have a plan for shipping it to St. Louis by water which, if I can carry it out successfully, will save you all freight charges and bring you in a net result of at least one dollar a bushel."

"Why, Jack, you astonish me! What is this plan?"

"I'd rather say nothing about it just now," said the boy, with a smile.

And with that the little woman had to be content.

CHAPTER II.—A Cruise In the Swamp.

On the following morning at half-past five Jack Frost and his particular friend, Joe Beaseley, who worked for Farmer Greene, met by appointment at the end of the line between the two farms where it faced upon the creek. It was the first day of September, and the sun was just rising above the distant landscape into a perfectly clear sky.

"Well, Jack, where are we bound for?" asked Beaseley, curiously.

"We're bound for the swamp," was the prompt reply.

Half a mile from where the boys stood was a narrow and deep stream which flowed into the creek. It formed the boundary of the Harper property on the west. This branch ran through a small but dense swamp. In the early spring its surface was overflowed with water. It was covered with a thick growth of trees, and the place was dark and dismal. Hardly any one ever visited the swamp except Jack Frost. He was rather fond of exploring out-of-the-way places, and this deep and dark morass had early attracted his attention. Just before his uncle died he had made a small raft and threaded its gloomy recesses, and the two boys, when they reached the edge of the swamp that morning, found the raft floating in the very spot Jack had left it months before, with its long pole lying undisturbed among the bushes.

"I'll bet there hasn't been any one here since you tied that raft to that stump," said Joe, in a positive tone.

"Doesn't look as if there had been, that's a fact."

"How long ago was that?"

"Last spring."

"You say we're going right through the swamp, eh?"

"That's what we are."

"Will this blamed old raft hold together, do you think?"

"Sure. Why not? Can't you see that I put it together to last? I didn't propose to have it come apart up in that morass and dump me out where I couldn't extricate myself, and nobody would hear my shouts for assistance. Not much, Joe Beaseley," and Jack wagged his head sagaciously.

"What sort of an exploring expedition are we going on?" asked Beaseley, when they had pushed off from the shore, Jack manipulating the pole in a skilful manner.

"None whatever," replied Frost.

"Well, what's in the wind, anyway?" persisted Joe, consumed by curiosity as to the object of the watery jaunt.

"Business," replied Jack, laconically.

"Business?" ejaculated Beasley, in astonishment.

"Just so."

"What kind of business?"

"I told you I was thinking of building a kind of houseboat to float our wheat down the creek to the Chippewa, down the Chippewa to the Mississippi, and down the Mississippi to St. Louis, didn't I?"

"Sure you did. It's the finest scheme I ever heard of. It will be a jim-dandy trip, and you promised to take me along with you if I'd help you build the boat and assist in navigating it afterward."

"You got it all right," grinned Jack, working the raft so as to avoid a suuken log whose nose was just on the level with the water.

"You can just bet I'll help you build the old Noah's Ark, and I'm ready to do my share toward seeing that it reaches St. Louis, too. I wouldn't miss it if Mr. Greene was to promise me a whole acre of his farm for myself if I'd agree to stay back here and let somebody else take my place. No, sir; not for Joe."

"I thought I could depend on you, Joe."

"You bet your boots you can. But what has that to do with this here trip up into the swamp?"

"Everything."

"How so?"

"We're making this trip to procure the material with which to build the boat," replied Jack.

"Are you going to cut down some of these trees? I see you brought an axe and a coil of rope with you."

"Cut down nothing," answered Frost. "I expect to find the stuff I want already prepared for us to use."

"You don't stay!" replied Joe, in some surprise.

"I do say so, and you'll say so, too, when I show you what we've come after."

"You saw the stuff when you were here before?"

"I did. How else should I know it is to be got?"

"That's right," admitted Beaseley. "It it's all

ready cut down, it will save us a powerful lot of labor."

"I wish we could build a boat big enough to take Mr. Greene's grain, too. We could make quite a little sum out of the freight. But that's out of the question."

"I reckon it is. Do you know how many bushels of wheat Mr. Greene has got in his barns altogether?"

"Five or six thousand bushels."

"Seven thousand scant."

"That's a lot," said Jack. "I wish we had as much."

"Your farm is less than half the size of ours," replied Joe.

"I know it. We've done as well as could be expected, I'm sure."

"Mr. Greene says you're a wonder, Jack. He can't get it through his head that you never were on a farm before you came out here."

"Well, I never was."

"I don't see, either, how you could take hold of your aunt's place and make things pan out the way you have. I've been on a farm ever since I was knee-high to a grasshopper, and blame me if I have the nerve to attempt to run a place like you do."

"You forget I have John Gray, who is an experienced man, at my back. I depend a lot on his advice."

"That's all right. He's a good worker and understands his business from A to Z, but just the same he hasn't got the head to run a farm successfully. If he had he wouldn't be working for you to-day. He's failed as an independent farmer and lost all his money at it."

"It seems to come natural to me to do the right thing and make the most out of my opportunities just as soon as I see my way clear. When I figured up the trouble and expense of carting our wheat to Eden, loading it on the cars there, paving freight to Chicago and other necessary expenses, I began to consider, since we have a continuous waterway from the farm right to the St. Louis elevators, if I couldn't manage to float the grain down there on a boat that I could build myself with your help."

"And you decided you could?"

"I did."

"I wouldn't have thought of such a thing in a coon's age," said Beaseley, looking at his companion admiringly. "And if I had, I shouldn't have known how to go to work to bring it about."

"I was good at mathematics at school," replied Jack. "I calculated the size and cubical capacity necessary in a houseboat capable of carrying, say, three thousand bushels of wheat in perfect safety down a river like the Mississippi, as well as making allowance for a small living compartment for the navigators themselves."

"Gee! You're as good as a school-teacher."

"Oh course, I don't mean to attempt to build a real boat. I'm not a naval architect, nor a ship-builder. My idea is to construct a serviceable raft first as the foundation for the house in which I expect to store the grain in transit."

"I'll bet you'll do it all right," answered Beaseley, confidently. "Whatever you set out to do I guess you accomplish, or know the reason why."

"You seem to have a pretty good opinion of my abilities, Joe," smiled Jack.

"You can bet your boots I have; but I know one chap who hasn't," grinned Joe.

"Do you mean Felix Plunkett?"

"I do that. That fellow gives me a pain with his dandified airs. He thinks because his old man is the boss storekeeper and the postmaster of Eden that he's it. Well, he isn't by a long shot. He's jealous of you. It's like waving a red flag before a wild bull to mention your name before him. He can't say anything too mean about you. And what good does it do him? The little fool can't see that nobody takes any stock in what he says against you."

"I certainly try to do the right thing by everybody," said Jack.

"Of course you do. You're the most popular fellow in the county, bar none."

"Come off, Joe."

"I don't come off. I'm telling you the cold fact. All the boys like you and speak well of you, except Plunkett and two or three of his cronies, who side in with him because it's to their interest to do so. As for the girls! Well, say! You're first favorite from the fall of the flag."

"Aren't you trying to get me stuck on myself?" grinned Frost.

"Ho! You aren't built that way, Jack!" and Beaseley wagged his head in a conclusive kind of way. "You can't tell me you aren't the real persimmons. Is there a social gathering for miles around where us young folks are in the majority that is considered complete without you? No, siree! That voice of yours, and the way you make your fingers prance over the strings of your banjo, wins every time."

"Then my popularity, as you call it, is really due to the fact that I possess the ability to entertain an audience. Is that it? You might give Plunkett the tip, then, if he has the grit, he might learn to play the instrument, and thus acquire the ascendancy he is so eager to possess."

"Pooh! He'd made a fine banjo player, I don't think. Besides, he can't sing worth sour apples. Even if he could play and sing as well as you it wouldn't make him really popular. Just the same, if you lost your voice and a finger or two, so you couldn't sing or play any more, you wouldn't be liked a wee bit less. It's the boy himself, and not what he can do in the entertainment line, which counts. Do you want to know the real reason why Felix Plunkett is dead nuts on you?"

"Oh, I'm not particularly curious," replied Jack, carelessly.

"I'm going to tell you, anyway. It's because you've cut him out with Virginia Earle."

Miss Earle was the eldest daughter of Gordon Earle, cashier of the Eden National Bank.

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Jack, flushing through the tan of his countenance.

"Is that so? I'm going it to you straight, Jack. You only met her once, I know, at that party she attended at Carden's farm. Carden is her uncle. Plunkett was there, too, and you ought to remember how mad he was all the evening because you danced three times with Virginia and took her in to supper. All the boys said you were mashed on her."

Jack kept his head turned away while Joe was speaking.

"Well, she's been just crazy to meet you again."

"What are you giving me, Joe Beaseley?" asked Jack, in some confusion.

"I'm giving you the truth. You ought to feel good over it, for Virginia Earle is called the prettiest girl in Eden County."

Jack made no reply.

"Felix is plumb gone on her, and it exasperates him to know that she thinks so much of you and doesn't seem the least bit interested in him. He persists in forcing his attentions upon her, though the fellows tell me she hands him out plain hints enough to settle any other boy; but he's too thick to tumble to the truth."

"I'm not surprised," replied Jack. "But here we are at the end of our cruise. What do you think of that?" and the boy pointed at a bend in the stream which ran into the marsh.

CHAPTER III.—Harvesting the Timber.

Piled up before them the boys saw a heap of logs, planks, boards and other fugitive lumber which had come down from the sawmills, miles up the country. One end of a big log had been driven ashore by the current and had jammed itself between two trees. All the rest of the boards, planks and timber had rested upon this one, and, being driven in by the sweep of the stream at the bend, had been entangled and held by it.

"Gracious!" exclaimed Joe Beaseley, in no little astonishment, "what a lot of wood is there."

"I should say there is. Enough to build several rafts."

"With a house on each of them."

"Perhaps. It would all depend on the size of the rafts and the house."

"Oh, I meant small ones."

"We shall be doing the neighborhood a service by removing this wood."

"How so?"

"Can't you see that it is gradually choking the stream up?"

"Sure thing. A blind man could see that."

"Why, how could a blind man see that, or anything else?" asked Jack, looking inquiringly at his companion.

"Oh, you know what I mean. I meant a man must be blind who couldn't see it."

"That's more like it. If that heap isn't cleared away the whole course of the stream will be choked by it in time. Then, when the snow melts next spring our farms, and many others in this vicinity, will be overflowed by the high water, and there would be the dickens to pay."

"I guess there would be," admitted Joe.

"We don't need all that lumber for our raft," said Jack, as he scanned the pile critically, "but it would be a pity not to save it, though it would cost a good deal of hard labor. It would come in handy in a good many ways."

"I'm willing to help you save it," said Joe. "I don't mind a little hard work, for I'm used to it."

"Well, we'll consider that later on."

"You're not going to build the raft up here, are you?"

"Of course not."

"Going to let the stuff float down through the swamp, eh?"

"That's my idea. The current will carry it to the creek. You may not have noticed, but the swing of the current where it empties into the creek sets right in to a bit of ground at the extreme points of our farm. I have driven several poles down into the bottom at a certain point, leaving the ends sticking several feet above the water. They'll catch the first logs we send down, and the rest will pile on top or jam up against them. A few may escape into the creek, but not many."

"You're got a great head, Jack."

"There's nothing particularly smart about that. It's merely an illustration of cause and effect—the same principle which has caused this accidental dam here."

"I suppose we may as well start in to throw these planks and boards into the current. It'll take some time, you know," viewing the amount of labor involved somewhat doubtfully.

"Is that the way you'd engineer the job, Joe?" laughed Frost.

"Why, how else would you do it?"

"There's an easier and much better way."

"If there is I want to know it," said Joe. "I'm not anxious to do any more work than is necessary."

"What do you suppose I brought that rope for?"

"You've got me. I'm not bright at guessing riddles."

"Well, I'll show you. Just make a sliding loop at that end will you?"

"Sure," and Beaseley hastened to comply with this request. "There you are."

"Now crawl out onto that lumber, reach down over the end and hook the loop over the nose of that mischievous log which has caused all this trouble."

Joe followed the directions to the letter, and then stood up, watching to see what was going to occur.

"Do you want to get a good sousing and some heavy cracks on the head?" shouted Frost at him.

"Not on your life I don't," returned Beaseley, not moving, however.

"Then come back here."

"What for? This is a nice, airy spot where I am."

"Is it?" laughed Jack. "If the foundation was to come away from underneath your feet all of a sudden you'd think differently."

"Any danger of it doing that?" asked Joe, in some alarm, hastily moving toward where his companion stood on a projecting point of the shore.

"Not until you give me the benefit of your muscles."

"What are you going to do?"

"I'm going to yank the key log out from under that pile after I cut away a part of the end here where it's caught in this tree."

"Oh, I see. That'll let the whole pile of stuff down with a rush," replied Joe, who could see through a millstone when the hole was pointed out to him.

"I rather think it will. Then the surplus water above will follow and push the lumber and logs before it. There's only one obstacle which may temporarily disarrange my project."

"What is that?"

"The timber may get caught at some point in the swamp and pile up again."

"We can easily set them free again," replied Joe, confidently.

"Can we? I don't know about that," answered Jack, doubtfully.

"Why not?" asked Beaseley, in surprise.

"It may get jammed where we couldn't reach it on the raft."

"What would you do in that case?"

"I don't propose to cross a bridge until I come to it. In other words, I'm not going to worry about such a thing until it actually takes place."

"That's right. I agree with you there. Do you want me to do the chopping here?"

"You can begin if you're anxious for the exercise. When you get tired I'll lend a hand."

Beaseley took the hatchet and began at the job. The log proved to be a more stubborn proposition than they had calculated on. Joe hacked away for a quarter of an hour, and then Jack relieved him. In the course of half an hour, however, they weakened the log to such an extent that Frost believed their muscles would do the rest. So they got hold of the rope and began to exert themselves.

Inch by inch the key of the lumber structure began to yield. Planks and slabs and timber occasionally disengaged themselves from the mass and started with the stream down through the swamp.

"Once more, old man," cried Jack, bracing himself for a mighty effort.

Joe put his foot against a convenient tree and then both pulled away for all they were worth. Then something happened. The key log suddenly came away with a rush, and Joe and Jack went heels over head backward, Beaseley narrowly escaping a ducking in the swamp.

"Wow!" howled Joe, sitting up and rubbing the dirt out of his eyes.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Jack, who was the first to pick himself up.

"I don't see anything funny about that," grumbled Beaseley, feeling his back and other parts of his body, to make sure he was still whole. "I nearly busted my back."

"A miss is as good as a mile, old fellow," grinned Frost.

"You wouldn't say that if you'd got the whack in the jaw I caught," objected his companion.

"Get up and watch the lumber shoot."

Joe got up and looked.

"It's a regular mill-stream now, isn't it?"

"That won't last long."

"Do we go back on the raft?"

"Of course. I want to see that the channel through the swamp keeps clear. If it chokes up we've got to assist things if we can."

"Suppose we get stuck ourselves in the heart of the old morass?"

"Oh, don't begin supposing trouble is going to occur. You might hoodoo the whole scheme."

"I wouldn't like to do that," replied Joe, so seriously that Jack had to laugh at him.

"If you're ready we'll go afloat. It's breakfast time by now, and I'm beginning to get hungry," he said, stepping onto the raft.

"Same here," replied Joe, following him with alacrity.

They cast off, poled the raft into the current

and then allowed things to take their course, which they did in a very satisfactory manner. Wherever they came across logs or pieces of timber caught in the projections of the swamp they pushed them clear. In this way they continued on down through the morass toward the creek, preceded, surrounded and followed by a great company of fugitive timber. Fortunately no serious difficulty was encountered during the trip, which was a great deal shorter than when they had to pole the raft upstream. They arrived at length at their destination, where they found the advance lumber anchored to the obstructing poles placed at the point of the bight by Jack.

"The whole collection will be here in an hour," said Frost. "If it's all the same to you, Joe, we'll go to breakfast now. You eat with me, of course."

CHAPTER IV.—A Leap for Life.

After breakfast Beaseley returned to the Greene farm to attend to certain chores about the place, while Jack employed himself in a similar way around his own place. At one o'clock the two boys met again at the bight of land near the creek, and during the rest of the afternoon busied themselves hauling the fugitive timber onto dry land and separating it into individual piles, ready for business. This work took up all of their spare time for several days. At length they had sorted out as much timber as Jack calculated he could use in the construction of the raft, which, owing to the weight it would have to sustain, was designed to be quite a ponderous affair, so far as its foundation was concerned.

"We'll leave the rest of the stuff for future consideration," remarked Jack, as the two boys sat on an old log, resting, and watched the sun setting in all its glory in the west.

"I haven't any kick coming," grinned Joe, as he mopped the perspiration from his freckled forehead.

"You don't feel like backing out of the rest of the business, do you?" asked Frost, with a cheerful smile.

"I should say not. The most disagreeable and least interesting part is over. I'm just tickled to take hold of what is to come."

"You won't find it all fun."

"Oh, I don't know. I'm willing to take chances on that."

"I hope I won't make any mistakes in my calculations," said Jack. "If I do, we won't be able to carry all the wheat down the river, which would be a great pity and a big disappointment to me."

"Oh, I guess you'll come out all right," said Joe, reassuringly.

"There must be no guesswork about it," asserted Frost. "The moment such a thing as that enters into the scheme we'll be all at sea."

"If it was my wheat I'd be willing to take chances on you making a success of your plan."

"Much obliged, Joe. You seem to put lots of confidence in me."

"Sure. Why not?" replied Beaseley, stoutly.

"Well, the proof of the pudding is in the eating," replied Jack, rising. "To-morrow morning I'm going to town to purchase the necessary hardware with which to begin operations. Want to come along?"

"Of course I do."

"All right. I'll have the mare harnessed up ready to start about nine o'clock. I'll look for you about that time."

The boys started off together, and separated in the Harper farmyard, Joe proceeded on through the gate, down the lane, and, vaulting the first fence he came to, cut across the fields to the Greene farm.

Next morning he was on hand in plenty of time, and helped Jack harness up his favorite roadster. Then they started for Eden in high spirits. They drove into town as the clocks were striking ten. Nathan Plunkett kept all the articles in his store that Jack expected to purchase, but somehow or another the boy didn't care to trade with him as long as there were other stores in town that could supply his wants. He stopped in front of Josiah Allen's store, Mr. Plunkett's most successful business opponent, and the postmaster, who happened to be looking out of his window at the time, took note of the fact, and the circumstance did not make Nathan feel any better disposed toward the boy he cordially detested, and on whom he hoped some day in the near future to have full satisfaction. Jack purchased nails of two or three sizes, a small keg of spikes, a new saw, a stout hatchet and sundry other articles of hardware.

"Going to build a house?" asked the clerk, with a grin.

"Sure," replied Jack. "I'm thinking of getting married and setting up housekeeping."

"Don't forget to invite me to the wedding."

"I'll keep you in mind. Here, Joe, carry these packages out to the wagon and watch the team. I'm going over to the post-office to see if there's any mail for us."

There was a letter for his aunt, which Felix Plunkett handed out to him in an ungracious way, as if it went against his grain to wait on Frost. While he was in the act of putting it in his pocket the fire alarm bell rang, and Felix vaulted over the counter and ran to the door. A few moments later one of the fire engines, a steamer lately imported from Chicago, dashed by with a jingle of bells. Jack left the store in a hurry and crossed over to his team.

"Drive ahead, Joe. Let's see where the fire is."

Beaseley kept the engine in sight until he saw it draw up near a fire-plug on a corner a dozen blocks from where they started. They were now in the residential section of Eden, where many of the better-class citizens of the town had their homes. A crowd was already gathering in the vicinity of a pretentious-looking three-story dwelling; from nearly every one of the front windows smoke was issuing, though not densely. Joe drew the mare up near the off curb and then directed his attention toward the imperiled house.

"Good gracious!" he suddenly exclaimed. "That's Gordon Earle's house."

"You don't mean Virginia Earle's—"

"Yes, I do. That's Virginia Earle's home. Hey, where are you going, Jack?"

Frost had sprung to the street and was running toward the burning house.

"Has the family got out?" asked Jack of a policeman who was endeavoring to establish a fire line in that direction.

"I couldn't tell you. Stand back, please."

The boy, in some excitement, slipped away and addressed the same question to two or three of the spectators in turn, but they could give him no information. Further on he tackled another policeman, but the man, instead of answering his question, pushed him roughly back into the crowd of curious onlookers. At this juncture the crowd exhibited a sudden spasm of excitement.

Jack looked toward the scene of the fire and saw the form of a girl, which, even at that distance, his sharp eyes recognized as Virginia Earle, leaning out of a side window on the third floor, toward the rear of the house, where it joined a three-story brick structure. The smoke was sifting out of the window all around her, and her position was apparently one of great peril. Even as the boy looked she was joined by a little, golden-haired creature, whom Jack knew to be Virginia's sister. The sight of the girl, who had occupied a great share of his thoughts ever since he was introduced to her some six weeks before at Carden's farm, standing in imminent danger of losing her life, with no one seemingly going to her assistance, aroused Jack to a fever of excitement.

He burst through the crowd, eluded the policeman who sought to stay his course, dashed across the street and, springing up the front steps of the Earle dwelling, disappeared inside the house, battling his way upward through the smoke, which was filling every nook and corner, in a frantic effort to reach the third floor and the imperiled girls in the rear. When he arrived at the second floor landing he saw that the rooms in the back were blazing furiously, indicating that the fire had originated in this part of the house. Jack realized that Virginia and her little sister were standing right over this sea of flame, which at any moment might burst through the ceiling and cut them off from all hope of rescue.

It was slow and suffocating work for him to make his way to the landing of the third floor through the choking smoke, which made his eyes run water and his lungs pant for a breath of fresh air. But he persevered, for he knew the lives of the two girls were at stake, and might depend entirely upon his personal efforts. He reached the upper landing at last, rushed to a front window, where he leaned out, dizzy and half-choked, and drew in copious draughts of air, until he felt in a measure recovered. The crowd in front saw him and set up a shout. The boy did not seem to hear or notice them, and soon withdrew from the window and began fighting his way to the rear. Already the flames were eating their way through the flooring of the passage, and he could see the glare from other flames beyond through the dun-colored smoke.

To proceed slowly and cautiously any longer in this direction Jack saw was folly; he would only be overcome by the smoke. He must make a bold dash for the room where Virginia and her sister had taken refuge. And he did, stumbling and reeling like a drunken man into the chamber where, through the misty cloud of smoke, he saw

the shadowy forms of the two girls at the window. In another moment he was standing by their side, and Virginia, who had a short length of stout clothesline in her hands, recognized him with a glad cry.

"Jack, you will save us, will you not?" she exclaimed, almost piteously.

"I will," he said, gamely, "or perish with you in the flames."

He looked out of the window to see what the firemen were doing to effect the rescue of the girls. There were a number of them in the yard below, some carrying in a line of hose, others yelling and gesticulating violently to the hook and ladder people, who had just arrived, to bring on their ladders.

"Oh, heavens!" cried Virginia, throwing one of her arms around Jack's neck in a spasm of terror. "The room is filling with fire!"

Her little sister seemed stricken speechless with fear, for she never uttered a sound. The flames were encroaching so fast upon them from behind that Frost saw that their position would be absolutely untenable before the firemen could get a ladder up to the window.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed. "Something must be done, or we three will surely be sacrificed."

He glanced down at the ground, forty feet below, and then at the roof, close at hand, of the adjoining building. In a moment he had made up his mind what he would do. It was a desperate expedient, but necessity knows no law. He removed his jacket and threw it far out into the yard; then he snatched the short clothesline from Virginia's grasp and hurriedly made one end fast to the leg of the single bed, the head of which stood near the window.

"I'm going to try to reach yonder roof by springing to it from the sill outside. If I am successful, quickly unfasten the end of the line I have tied to the bed and fasten it around your sister under her arms, and I'll draw her up there. After that I'll throw the rope back to you, and you must tie yourself in a similar manner. Do you understand?"

She nodded in a terrified way. There was no time to be lost if he hoped to carry his plan to a successful issue. The flames were already reaching for them. He tied the rope securely around his waist, stepped out on the sill and measured with his eyes the distance he proposed to jump. Then, nerving himself for the effort, he leaped upward.

CHAPTER V.—Commencing Operations.

A hundred pair of eyes were on Jack Frost when he made his thrilling spring for the adjoining room, and a great cheer broke from as many throats when it was seen that he had caught onto the ledge and hung there for a moment dangling in mid-air. Then his muscles of steel came into full play. He drew himself up until his chin rested on the coping, and then with a mighty effort he swung his legs outward and upward and landed upon the edge of the cornice. It was comparatively easy for him to scramble to the roof.

"Quick, Virginia," he cried to the girl, who had watched his risky feat with distended eyes. "Unfasten the rope and put it about your sister."

The girl seemed to wake from her trance and hastened to obey his order. As soon as she had tied the line properly under the child's arms she lifted her onto the window-sill.

"Swing off, little one," cried Jack, pulling upon her and dislodging her from her foothold.

The little girl uttered a thrilling scream, for she thought she was falling. But she wasn't. She was sailing up through the air as fast as the boy could work his arms. In a moment or two he had her safe on the roof and was unfastening the line.

"Catch!" shouted Jack, throwing the rope-end back to Virginia.

The girl caught it and began at once to tie it around herself. Then she bravely stepped out on the sill. And it was high time that she did, for her dress was already smoking, and the fire was creeping up all about the spot she had but just left.

"Now swing off!" cried Jack, bracing himself to meet her weight.

She obeyed him, and he started to pull like a good fellow. As she came within arm's reach of the coping she grasped it. Jack seized her by the arms and pulled her over onto the roof.

"Thank heaven! You are safe!" said the boy, fervently.

Virginia gave a little gasp as she looked into his eyes, realized that her danger was over, and then the reaction overcame her and she fainted dead away. At that moment the scuttle in the roof, a little distance away, was thrown back and a couple of firemen appeared. They were surprised to find Frost and the two girls up there, for they hadn't seen Jack's leap, nor the rescue which followed.

"How did you get here?" one asked the boy.

"I jumped for this roof, was lucky to reach the coping, and then with this line I pulled the girls up."

"This girl seems to have fainted," said the man, noticing the limp form of Virginia lying in Jack's arms. "We'll take her down to the street."

"I wish you would," replied the boy.

Frost followed in the rear of the procession, and in a couple of minutes the two daughters of the bank cashier were carried into a residence on the other side of the rear street. Jack thought it time to get back to Joe and his team. He was elated, because not only had he done his duty nobly, but had saved the lives of two helpless girls, one of whom he liked better than any one else in this world, not excepting his Aunt Lucy, and that was saying a great deal. First, however, he had to recover his jacket, which he had removed just before making his great leap for the roof, and which he had cast into the yard as far as possible from the blazing building, now a mass of flames from the first floor to the roof. He found that one of the firemen had carried his jacket outside and placed it on the hook and ladder truck so it would be out of harm's way.

He put it on, pushed his way through the crowd, avoiding a local reporter who was after him, and reached his wagon, where Joe was watching the flames and wondering what had become of his companion. Beaseley did not witness Frost's rescue of the two girls, as the wagon

was too far away, and did not dream that Jack was otherwise employed than as a front row spectator of the conflagration.

"Jumping Christopher! What's the matter with your face?" exclaimed Joe, when his friend climbed up on the seat beside him. "You're like a smoked ham. You must have been pretty close to the fire."

"I was," grinned Jack, who, now that he was out of all danger and the girls were safe, was disposed to make light of his thrilling adventure.

"Well, it's too bad. What was all that shouting about a little while ago? There seemed to be excitement to burn. I thought probably some of the Earle family were being rescued from the building by the firemen with their ladders."

"The cause of the excitement," replied Jack, slowly, "was due to the fact that Miss Virginia and her sister were cut off by the flames from escape through the front of the house, and were assisted from the window of a room where they had taken refuge to the roof of the adjoining building."

"Gee whiz!" exclaimed Joe, in some excitement. "I wish I had seen that."

"I think we've wasted time enough here, Joe," said Frost, taking up the reins and turning the mare's head down the street. "I've got a few more things to buy, and then we'll start for home."

They reached the farm about one o'clock, deposited their purchases in the small barn and went in to dinner. After the meal they loaded on a barrow such implements as they needed to begin work with and wheeled them down to the scene of their operations. The afternoon was employed in cutting down six stout trees, which provided them with foundation logs thirty feet long, which they carefully trimmed. In each of these they chopped out wide notches, exactly two feet apart, and of a depth sufficient to receive and hold the twelve-foot stout slabs they proposed to spike into place next morning.

Promptly at sunrise the boys were on hand to resume work upon the craft Jack put so much dependence on.

"We'll take our morning bath first," remarked Frost, getting out of his clothes as fast as he could, and his example was quickly followed by Joe.

After they had disported themselves for ten minutes in the basin Jack said:

"We'll begin the framework of the raft before we dress, as we've got to put it together on the water. Fetch a couple of those slabs while I get the small sledgehammer and a handful of spikes."

Then they placed two of the logs side by side, close to the shore. Jack spiked each end of the two slabs to the inner log, at the extremities of it. Then he and Joe rolled the outer log away from the other until the two were twelve feet apart, and the other end of each slab was spiked to it, thus forming the shape of a raft—thirty feet long and twelve feet wide.

"Now, Joe, we'll push each of the other logs one by one into place and spike the slabs to them."

This work was immediately carried out, and thus the six foundation logs were secured in place at equal distances apart.

"Now for the balance of the slabs," said Frost.

The thirteen remaining slabs were spiked into the notches which had been provided to receive them, and the boys concluded they had done enough until after breakfast. They resumed their clothes and viewed with a great deal of satisfaction the stout framework on which they were to build the upper works of their novel craft. Then they went to breakfast.

After breakfast the boys went back to the basin. They learned that wheat was then \$1.10. It was some job to complete the raft to their utter satisfaction but it was nearly finished, and looked strong enough for their purposes. Then they went to dinner to meet Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Earle, Virginia and her sister who had arrived a little while before. The Earles stayed to dinner. Jack was congratulated on his heroism displayed at the late fire.

CHAPTER VI.—A Plot Against the Wheat.

Mrs. Harper knew that her nephew and his friend Beaseley were engaged upon some enterprise in which they took an unusual interest, but as Jack said nothing to her about the nature of the work she made no inquiries, being fully satisfied that whatever the boy gave his time to was all right, and that he would no doubt tell her all about it in good time. That evening she mentioned the subject of the shipment of the wheat.

"There is no hurry, auntie," Jack told her. "Wheat is going up every day. You know, Mr. Fogarty told you it was one dollar and ten cents this morning."

"Yes, Jack; but, as you know, I shall soon need the money to take up the mortgage."

"That will be all right. You have four weeks yet to provide for it. Even if you didn't ship it, and the price continued to rise, you could easily get a loan on it that would see you through. I am arranging now to ship the grain inside of the next ten days, unless it should be considered advisable to hold on longer for a higher price."

"Do as you think best, Jack. I rely entirely on you."

"I shan't fail you, you may depend."

Jack and Joe returned to the construction of the raft next morning at sunrise, worked like Trojans all day, and when they finally knocked off they had the satisfaction of knowing that the raft itself was finished. It only remained to build the superstructure or house in which Jack expected to carry his aunt's wheat to the elevator at St. Louis. This was the most pleasing part of the job, because it promised to be the most difficult of accomplishment. The structure was to be a sort of Noah's Ark in appearance, and was to occupy a space ten feet by twenty-five, and to be high enough to accommodate the cargo without being top-heavy. The deck of the raft had been extended a foot and a half beyond the hull part on the sides, making the width fifteen feet, and had been rounded out five additional feet forward and the same amount aft, making the extreme length over all forty feet. A small, light addition was to be built onto the after part of the cargo-house to serve as sleeping quarters. They expected to cook and eat in the open air,

weather permitting, using a small stove imbedded in a sand-box.

Jack had his plans down fine, and Joe fell in with them as though they were manufactured to his order. The next day was Sunday, and, of course, nothing was done on the raft, though both Jack and Joe visited the basin to see that everything was just as they left them the previous evening. The boys, as usual, went to meeting at the little brick church at the cross-roads, and afterwards attended Sunday-school.

Then they parted for dinner. Joe spent the afternoon with Jack, and the boys talked enthusiastically about the good time they expected to have navigating the Chippewa and Mississippi rivers.

"And what will you do with the raft after you are done with it? Seems a pity to let it go for firewood, after all the trouble we will have gone to after it's completed."

"It would pay to have it towed 'way back up here," replied Jack. "I may be able to sell it as a marine curiosity."

"It will be that all right when we are done with it," snickered Beaseley. "I say, what's the matter with our advertising up in the St. Louis papers as the only and original Noah's ark?"

"Well, Joe, you have thought up an original idea at last, haven't you?"

"Oh, you don't know me yet, Jack. My head is chockful of the brightest things under the sun, only I can't always fish them out when they're wanted."

"I sympathize with you, old man. Come, let's go to supper, then we'll go over and see Will Benson and see if we can't make life miserable for him for an hour or two."

Will Benson was a mutual friend who lived a mile and a half from the Harper farm, and, as he had a couple of interesting sisters, to one of whom Joe Beaseley was somewhat partial, the boys often found it to their taste to go over to the Benson farm and spend an evening. They had their usual good time on this occasion, and left the Benson place a little after nine to return to their homes.

The weather looked threatening, and there was every indication that it would rain before morning. This was not a desirable outlook for Jack and Joe, as it would interfere with the raft enterprise, and Jack especially was anxious to get the craft finished as soon as possible.

"It will be fierce if it rains to-morrow," said Beaseley, casting a doubtful glance at the sky."

"I should say it would," replied Jack, finding little consolation in the stormy aspect of the heavens. "However, it may rain during the night and clear off by the morning."

"That wouldn't be so bad; but I'm afraid we can't expect any such good luck. That sky looks as if it was getting ready for a week's business."

"A week! I should hope not. That would give us an awful setback."

"Well, you can't put any dependence at all in the wheather. If it starts in to rain to-night, it is liable to keep it up for twenty-four hours or forty-eight, for that matter. I wouldn't be surprised if it acted that way just to spite us."

Something damp and clinging struck Jack on the nose at that moment. He held out his hand, and presently another drop of water fell on it.

"It's begining to rain already," he said, gloomily.

"I see it is," coincided Beaseley.

They hastened their steps, for they had their good clothes on and didn't want to get them wet. But the rain had very little consideration for them, and came down faster and faster, and pretty big drops at that.

"I guess we're in for a good soaking all right," grumbled Joe. "I don't like this even a little bit."

"Nor I, either," agreed Jack. "But we can take refuge in the old tumble-down shack on the other side of these trees until this downpour blows over. It won't last long, judging from the way it is starting to come down."

"I'm ready to put in anywhere there's a roof to keep off the moisture."

"Let's run, then," said Jack, starting off at a rapid pace.

And Beaseley didn't lose a moment in following his lead. They reached the shanty in good time to escape the worst of the shower, which began to beat upon the roof of the ruin at a smart rate as soon as they got under cover.

"We're lucky," chuckled Jack. "If we were out in that we'd soon be a sight for sore eyes."

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Joe, suddenly, making a quick move to one side.

"What's the matter?" asked Frost.

"Something must have given away on the roof," grumbled Beaseley, "for a stream of water struck me on the back of the neck just now and soaked me to the waist."

Jack laughed, and then, fearing he might come in for a similar kind of bath, suggested that they get away back in a corner. Hardly had they taken up their new position when they heard a noise outside and two men ran into the shanty.

"I wonder how long this is goin' to last, Plunkett?" said one of the new comers, in surly tones.

"Oh, we've lots of time," replied his companion, in a voice familiar to Frost as belonging to the postmaster and storekeeper of Eden.

The boy, surprised to encounter Mr. Plunkett so far away from his usual stamping grounds, pressed Joe's arm and whispered in his ear to be as quiet as a mouse.

"Supposin' it keeps up all night, what then?" growled the first speaker.

"Oh, it won't keep up. It's early yet, and we might better be here than hugging a hedge," said the postmaster.

"I don't know but you're right, Plunkett. How far from here is the Harper farm?"

"About half a mile across the meadows."

"And where is the barn located that holds that there wheat?"

"Perhaps four hundred yards back of the house."

"Most of them kind of barns are raised on stilts like, a few feet from the ground. Kind of helps to keep the stuff dry. It'll make a pretty bonfire, I reckon," and the wondering boys heard the fellow chuckle.

They couldn't understand what he meant, but they were not long kept in the dark as to the intentions of the two men.

"I hope it will," almost hissed Mr. Plunkett. "At the price wheat is going these days those two thousand bushels will save the farm to the widow

and do me out of a good thing, unless we send it up in fire and smoke to-night."

"Ain't that what we're goin' to do? We didn't come away out here from town for nothin', I reckon."

"I should hope not. With the wheat lost to her, and no possibility of paying the mortgage, which comes due next month, I guess Mrs. Harper will be glad to listen to my terms if she wishes to keep a roof over her head," said Mr. Plunkett.

"And do you really mean to marry her?"

"That is my intention. She's a fine-looking little woman, not yet forty, and she just suits my idea of a second Mrs. Plunkett."

"And how do you think you suit her, eh?" said the postmaster's companion, with another chuckle. "I reckon she ain't exactly ready to take you for better or worse, or you wouldn't be so anxious to destroy her two thousand bushels of one-dollar-and-fifteen-cent wheat. It seems like an awful waste of good money, Plunkett; but I s'pose you've got to turn the screws on her, or she and the farm, too, will slip out of your grasp. You're a hard man, Plunkett, to run up against. I wouldn't like to owe you money I couldn't pay when the time came around."

"Don't get so gay, Monks," objected the Eden storekeeper. "I'm going to pay you well for this night's work, so you haven't any right to amuse yourself at my expense."

"Touchy, are you?" laughed the man called Monks. "I like to have my little joke, Plunkett. Kind of keeps me in good humor, I reckon. I see the rain is easing up a bit. What time do you s'pose it is?"

The postmaster pulled out his watch and then lit a match to consult it. As the match flared up the boys held their breath and sat like two statues, for the light, while it lasted, plainly revealed their presence in the shanty. But the backs of the two men were turned squarely upon them, and, as they did not turn around, having no suspicion that any one but their own two selves were in the place, Jack and Joe escaped their observation.

"Ten o'clock," reported Mr. Plunkett.

"I s'pose we'd better not make a move for an hour yet, to make sure. Most of the people here-about turn in about nine, and eleven is a good time to get busy. Has Mrs. Harper got a dog about the place?"

"Yes, but we ought to be able to avoid it. You have the tools with you, haven't you, to force an entrance through the back door?"

"I reckon I have. I ain't a professional house-breaker, you know, but I can open a door or window or stab a lock with the best of them. The knack comes natural to me. I was always clever at getting at the inside of things."

"Well, it isn't a hard job to get inside a barn, Monks, and this barn isn't any different to speak of from any other in the country. They're all built on the same plan. Once we're inside we'll have the game in our hands. Inside of ten minutes we'll have fired it in a dozen places. Mrs. Harper will sell no wheat this year, and before Christmas she'll be Mrs. Plunkett, or the farm will have a new tenant. In any case, it will have become my property, and that young cub, Jack Frost, will have to look for a living elsewhere."

Mr. Plunkett wound up his little speech with a

venomous intensity that showed he meant every word of it. At that moment something extraordinary happened. The old, rickety box on which Jack and Joe were seated suddenly gave way without warning, precipitating the two boys backward against the wall of the shack with a loud crash. They struck the time-worn boards with a shock that shook the shanty. The wood, being rotten and insecurely held by the rusty nails, yielded in turn, and the boys fell outside in a heap, and did not stop rolling until they butted up against the trees at the foot of the incline back of the old shack.

"Gee whiz!" exclaimed Beaseley, scrambling to his feet. "Was that an earthquake?"

"Hardly," laughed Frost, spitting out a mouthful of moist earth.

"Then what happened?"

"Why, don't you know?"

"Something gave way all at once. Maybe the shanty collapsed."

"No. You can't see it standing there in the same old place."

"Then I give it up."

"Why, the box gave way under us, we fell through the back of the shanty and rolled down here, a dozen feet away. I wonder what Mr. Plunkett and his friend Monks thought about it. We must have given them a great shock," and the boy chuckled as he pictured in his mind the consternation of the two rascals.

CHAPTER VII.—On Guard.

"Our clothes are in a nice state," grumbled Beaseley, picking off bits of damp soil from the front of his pocket as well as he could in the dark.

"Don't mention it, Joe," replied Jack, ruefully. "And they're our go-to-meeting togs at that."

"Hush!" whispered his companion. "That rascally Plunkett and his associate are investigating the cause of our mishap. I saw the flash of a match in the hole we punctured in the shack."

"Let's get back among the trees here, so they won't discover us," suggested Jack, and that plan was adopted. It had almost stopped raining, but that fact didn't interest the boys as much as it had done previous to their tumble. Their garments were a sight, and would have to be renovated before they could hope to put them on again; so a little superabundance of moisture didn't matter much now.

"Isn't that Nathan Plunkett an old scoundrel?" said Joe, when they had retired within the shelter of the little wood.

"I should say he is," answered Jack. "I never liked him, but I did not believe him to be so bad as to originate such a dastardly scheme as burning down our barn so as to destroy the two thousand bushels of wheat stored there and thus get my aunt's property in his clutches. He's a double-dyed rascal, if there ever was one."

"It's a mighty good thing we overheard those two skunks talking. Now we can put a spoke into their wheels. We'd better start right off for your barn and stand around the place. If we can catch old Plunkett at this little game I

guess he stands a pret' y good chance of going to jail."

"I should think he would," replied Jack, earnestly.

"He isn't very sweet on you, by the way he talks," snickered Joe.

"I've known that for some time. He's down on me because I'm making the farm pay. He had the idea at first that I would run it into the ground and thus tighten his grip on the property. As soon as he found out we were harvesting such a fine crop of wheat it broke him all up. He's been dead sore on me ever since."

"Maybe he'll be afraid to attempt to carry out his plan to-night, after what has happened," said Beaseley, as they were approaching the rear of the big barn where Mrs. Harper's grain was stored. "He must suspect that somebody was in the shanty all the time he and his companion were talking and, of course, overheard their conversation. I'll bet he's in a blue funk over it."

"Well, I'm not going to take any chances, if I have to stay up all night and watch," replied Jack, in a determined tone.

"I wouldn't, either. It's better to be sure than sorry," agreed Joe. "I'm willing to keep you company."

"I'm much obliged, Joe; but this isn't your funeral, and I have no right to ask you to lose your night's rest."

"Ho! Don't you s'pose I've got interest in your wheat, too? I've put nearly these days of good, solid work on that raft because I expect to have a high old time sailing down the rivers on it. If that wheat should happen to be destroyed, all my labor and all my prospects of the good time I've been dreaming over would go up with it. No, siree, bob! I can't afford to get it in the neck that way. I feel just like giving Mr. Plunkett one, two, three on the nut for contemplating such a rascally scheme," squaring off at an imaginary antagonist.

"We'll give him worse than that if we catch him at that trick," nodded Jack, in a tone which meant no good to the postmaster.

The boys took their position under the shadow of an old tool-house, where they commanded all approaches to the big barn, and patiently awaited developments. They conversed in low tones, while they kept their bright eyes wide open for suspicious interlopers. An hour passed away and nothing turned up. The rain-clouds were breaking up and passing away to the westward.

"There's the moon," exclaimed Joe, pointing to a ragged patch of the blue sky where the bright luminary was struggling to show herself through the flying scud. "We'll have a clear day to-morrow, after all."

"Looks like it," replied Jack, cheerfully. "Judging by the position of the moon, I should think it was getting on to midnight. I guess Mr. Plunkett has given up his project for to-night, possibly for good. If he believes that his plan was overheard at the old shanty, you may depend on it he'll be pretty shy of putting his head into a noose."

They stuck it out another hour, and then both the boys began to feel decidedly sleepy. The croak of a frog, and other droning noises of the night, produced a somnolent effect upon them, their heads dropped drowsily forward, and in a very short time, both were sound asleep. And,

while they slept, Mr. Plunkett and his companion Monks, fully persuaded that there had been eavesdroppers in the old shack while they were discussing their rascally plot, were beating it as fast as their legs could carry them to town. The boys, in spite of their uncomfortable condition, slept right on through the balance of the night, until John Gray, the hired man, coming out at day-break, found them there, much to his amazement. He woke them up and inquired why they had anchored themselves for the night in that spot instead of seeking their beds like all good Christians do.

"Good gracious! It is morning already?" ejaculated Jack, jumping to his feet in surprise. "We must have been asleep."

"I should say you had been. I found you both as sound as a bell," said Gray.

"And the barn!" almost gasped Frost, casting his eyes in the direction of the big granary.

"What about the barn?" asked the hired man, in a puzzled tone.

"Thank goodness! It is safe," cried Jack, fervently.

"Safe! You didn't think it was about to run away, did you?" said Gray, quizzically.

"We were afraid it would do worse than that," interjected Joe, solemnly.

"Oh, come now, boys. You haven't got your eyes open yet, or you wits about you."

"Haven't we? That's all you know about it," retorted Beaseley, in a nettled tone.

"The fact of the matter is, we sat down here to watch the barn, because we had good reason to fear that it would be burned down last night," explained Jack.

"Burned down!" exclaimed the hired man, in some astonishment. "Impossible!"

"Is that so?" replied Joe.

Then Jack told Gray how they had overheard Nathan Plunkett and a companion, whom he called Monks, in the shanty on the edge of the woods, where they had taken shelter from the rain on their way home, talking over their plan to destroy the granary.

"You don't mean to say that you actually heard Mr. Plunkett discussing such a criminal project?"

"That's just what I do mean to say," answered Jack, stoutly. "And I can prove it by Joe here."

"Surely you must have dreamed it all," replied Gray, incredulously, who, though he had no especial liking for the postmaster of Eden, could hardly credit the news that the storekeeper would connect himself with such a discreditable scheme.

"No, we didn't dream it all," chipped in Beaseley.

"I should say we didn't. Whether you believe it or not, it's the fact. You didn't think we'd stand guard out here on a damp night just for the fun of the thing? Nathan Plunkett is a rascal, and I'm going to let my aunt know just what sort of man he is. Come on, Joe."

Mrs. Harper was very much astonished when Jack submitted to her at the breakfast table his report of Mr. Plunkett's character and his rascally intentions toward her.

"It seems almost incredible," she said, with a painful expression.

"He seems determined to force you to marry him, and get the farm to boot, auntie."

"I wouldn't marry Mr. Plunkett if he was the last man on earth," she answered, indignantly; "even if I had any idea of ever marrying again, which I haven't. I thought I made that fact sufficiently plain to Mr. Plunkett when he proposed to me."

"Never mind, auntie," said Jack, reassuringly. "Don't let Mr. Plunkett worry you. I believe he'll keep kind of shady for a while, as I guess we gave him a good scare last night. He can't have the least idea who was in the old shanty while he and Monks were there, and that fact will keep him guessing, and make him rather shy of showing his face in this neighborhood again."

"I hope so. I never want to see his face again. When the mortgage comes due I'm going to send the money to him by you."

"All right, auntie. It would do me lots of good to see how reluctantly he will let go his hold on the farm."

Jack got his hat, left the house and made a bee-line for the anchorage of the raft.

CHAPTER VIII.—The Golden Hope.

Frost found Beaseley already at the basin waiting for him.

"Well, I'm ready for business," he said, with a cheerful expression.

"I see you are," replied Jack, producing a rude plan of the house they were to erect on the raft. "We'll begin by measuring off the dimensions upon the deck."

They walked across the plank which connected the unwieldy-looking raft with the shore.

Jack measured off ten feet from the extreme point of the rounded stern and made a cross on the boards with a piece of red chalk.

"Bring me that piece of scantling, Joe."

Beaseley brought it. Jack laid it down across the deck, told his companion to hold one end in position, and then drew a straight line from the side of the raft to the port side, intersecting the cross. He then measured off a foot and a half at each end and marked the spots.

"Come forward, Joe."

The performance was repeated within five feet of the point of the bow. A line was then drawn fore and aft on either side of the deck, connecting the foot-and-a-half marks upon the cross-line. The parallelogram thus outlined formed the exact dimensions of the proposed house.

"Now we'll lay down a new floor twelve by twenty-five feet," said Jack. "I will be raised six inches above the deck. We'll use a double layer, crossed, of those slabs for the foundation and then board it over."

That provided a couple of hours' work for them, and they proceeded to get busy without loss of time. On account of the previous night's rain there was a good deal of moisture in the air—humidity, the scientists call it, and the boys felt the effects of it, for they were soon perspiring.

"Gee whiz!" cried Joe, wiping his forehead, "it's blamed hot this morning."

"No hotter than Saturday, old man, but we feel it more, that's all."

"It's hot for the second week in September, if you want to know."

"If we're going to put this building through in record time you don't want to let a little thing like that bother you," grinned Jack.

"I can stand it as long as you can," retorted Joe, beginning to nail down the planks like a good fellow.

There was plenty of lumber of the kind the boys wanted, and more was coming all the time down the stream which ran through the swamp. The floor and the framework of the house was completed that day, the skeleton well secured and braced to the deck. Next day, the sides and ends were boarded up, leaving no openings whatever in the structure. On the ensuing day the skeleton of the sloping roof, extending a foot beyond the house line, so that when boarded over it would shed the rain, if they encountered any, was put in place. Thursday was devoted to completing the roof, in which a big hole was left, to which a cover was fitted, for receiving their cargo of grain.

Jack developed a simple but ingenious method for making the roof water-tight for a limited time—considerably longer than they expected to have any occasion to use the boat. He applied the same process to the sides, thus furnishing a secure receptacle for the wheat in transit. On Friday they built the deck-house, as Jack called it—a compartment five by twelve feet and eight feet high, with an opening to be shut in, if necessary, by a piece of sailcloth. Next morning Jack drove in to Eden, paid a flying visit to the Earles, and afterward purchased ten good-sized and stoutly hooped liquor barrels, which he brought back to the farm. That afternoon he and Joe attached five of the barrels securely on either side of the raft by means of stout ropes, nailed into the casks to prevent them from slipping. Before sundown the novel household was completed and ready to receive her cargo, now quoted at one dollar and thirty-five cents a bushel. Jack viewed it with pardonable pride, as the creation of his own intelligence, while Joe regarded it as the vehicle which was to provide them both with a fortnight or so of rare good fun and adventure.

"Now, let's christen it, Jack," he cried, enthusiastically.

"What shall we call it?" asked the chief constructor, thoughtfully.

"The Jack Frost. How will that do?" grinned Joe.

"Go on, you're foolish," replied his friend. "We'll call it the Golden Hope. That will be somewhat appropriate."

"All right, let her go at that. Three cheers for the Golden Hope," he cried, flinging his hat into the air and cheering, in which performance he was joined, but in a more dignified way, by Jack.

"On Monday we'll pole the craft around to the little wharf on the creek, and there we'll load her to the hatches, as the sailors say."

"And then we'll cut loose from our moorings and gently glide down stream, eh?" grinned Joe, in high glee. "Bet your life when we pass Eden we'll be piped off to the queen's taste."

"I've no doubt we'll be an object of interest to the curious, laughed Jack.

"You haven't given the snap away to your aunt yet, have you?"

Jack shook his head.

"No; I wanted to surprise her with the completed boat."

"You'll surprise her all right. I hope she won't make a kick against trusting the grain aboard of her," said Joe, getting solemn all of a sudden, such an alarming possibility occurring to him now for the first time.

"Don't worry about that," replied Jack, cheerfully. "Auntie trusts me implicitly. If I say it's perfectly safe, my word will go."

"I'd have a fit if there should be any hitch at this stage of the game," said Beaseley, so earnestly that Jack had to laugh at him.

"There's no danger of the *Golden Hope* floating away from her anchorage between this and Monday, is there?" asked Joe, anxiously.

"Not a bit more than there was all along," answered Jack, "This stout rope holds the boat securely. Besides, she's well inside the bight, and I don't believe would move to any extent until poled out into the current of the stream."

"I'm glad to hear it. I wouldn't sleep a wink if I thought there was a chance of the craft getting adrift."

After dinner next day Jack brought his aunt down to the basin to introduce her to the odd-looking boat, the history of which he had told her on the way to church, much to her astonishment.

"And do you really think that boat is stable enough to carry our wheat all the way to St. Louis, Jack?" Mrs. Harper asked, somewhat doubtfully, as she viewed the unwieldy marine contrivance.

"As sure as you live, auntie. She'll carry every bushel with perfect safety, save you a good many dollars in freight and furnish a couple of weeks' outing on the water for Joe and I."

Jack showed her over the craft, though there wasn't much to see, and she praised her nephew's ingenuity and pluck in putting the craft together.

Later on Jack brought John Gray down to look at the "*Golden Hope*." The hired man, who had had some experience in river craft of this order, examined the raft-boat with much curiosity and interest.

"Well," he said, after he had ascertained the object for which she was intended, "she's buoyant enough to carry the wheat to the Gulf, if necessary. You've got a great head to be able to build so substantial a craft out of fugitive lumber in two weeks. If you are satisfied that you and your friend Beaseley can navigate the craft between you as well as you have put it together, you ought to be able to get your wheat to St. Louis freight free all right."

"We can do that all right," replied the boy, confidently.

"It's something of a risk. I advise you to have your cargo insured before you start."

"I mean to do it, if it doesn't cost too much. I don't think there's risk enough to warrant a high premium."

"You can't tell. It's the unexpected which must be provided against, and the only way to offset that is by insurance. Then your mind will feel easier, and your aunt will be more satisfied."

And Jack fully agreed with him.

CHAPTER IX.—Undesirable Visitors.

On Monday morning the "*Golden Hope*" was poled around to the wharf on the creek, two extra hands were hired and the loading of the wheat aboard of her begun. While this work was in progress Jack and Joe rigged up a steering apparatus at the stern, which, when completed, was examined by John Gray, who declared it was strong and serviceable enough to answer the purpose required. Stout scantlings, six feet long, were nailed at intervals along the projecting edge of the deck and braced up against the superstructure, and to these uprights a long length of clothes-line was attached to form a kind of protecting railing all around, on either side, without fear of falling into the water, unless through carelessness. The cooking apparatus, a small stove in a shallow box of sand, was next provided. Then Jack drove to Eden and purchased the provision for the trip and a few cooking utensils; the balance of the outfit was furnished by Mrs. Harper herself, who had begun to take a lively interest in the expedition. The raft-boat stood the weight of her cargo in great shape, sinking gradually as ton after ton was shot into her big deckhouse. Her buoyancy was carefully investigated at intervals, and when half her load was aboard she had still two inches of displacement to her credit, according to Jack's calculations. At last the final bushel was aboard, and so closely had the bright boy figured that practically she was loaded clear up to her hatches. She rode the water three inches higher than Jack had expected, and that fact was a cause of much rejoicing all around. There was now no longer any doubt but she would bear the grain safely to her port of destination, accidents or mismanagement alone excepted. Jack made arrangements with an insurance agent to come out to the farm, view the boat and figure upon a two weeks' marine insurance. After the agent had examined the raft-boat and taken the testimony in the case he decided the risk was too great to accept at a sum which the assured would be willing to pay, and expressed himself to that effect, much to Mrs. Harper's disappointment. It is probable that the agent, when he returned to Eden, spread the intelligence about the "*Golden Hope*" about town, for quite a number of curious people drove out to the farm and asked permission to look at the craft. Among these was the assistant editor of the Eden "*Daily News*," and next day the whole town knew about Jack Frost's enterprise. The story, however, was highly complimentary of the boy's ingenuity and enterprise, and the editor took occasion also to mention the lad's pluck and nerve as shown at the recent fire where he had saved the Earle girls from an awful death. This publicity was rather annoying than otherwise to Jack Frost, but he had to put up with it, nevertheless. Ever since the raft-boat had gone into commission Joe Beaseley slept on board of her. In fact, he could hardly tear himself away from her to go to his meals. Mr. Greene allowed him a full month's vacation, and he declared he was going to extract pleasure out of every minute of it, except, of course, when he was asleep. The loading of the wheat was finished late Wednesday afternoon, and it was decided to sail on

the following morning at sunrise. After the sun set the wind rose somewhat, and the waters of the creek ruffled up enough to cause the raft-boat to strain slightly at her cable. Clouds began to pile up in the sky, and before eight o'clock the conditions looked stormy and unpropitious. Joe ate his supper with Jack, and then both boys returned to the Golden Hope. Jack had purchased two lanterns—one with red glass, the other with green—which he proposed to display at night on either side of the boat, above the roof of the deckhouse, after they had started upon their trip down the rivers. In addition, he brought aboard that night an ordinary white glass lantern used about the farm.

"Let's rig up the lantern to-night, just for the fun of the thing," suggested Joe. "It will look kind of shipshape, you know."

Jack fell in with the idea, and the lanterns were accordingly run up on their respective poles—the green on the starboard side, the red on the port.

"Now we look like the real thing," said Joe, with one of his cheerful grins. "Gee! It's beginning to blow some, isn't it?"

The white lantern was intended to illuminate the small deckhouse. The boys, however, did not think it necessary to light it on this occasion. They sat together in the little cabin, as Joe called it, and talked about the trip they were to enter on the next day. At length they grew weary, and Joe said he guessed it was time to turn in. Jack didn't propose to roost on board when he had a comfortable room to go to, so he bade Joe good-night and started for the house, a third of a mile away. He had gone about half the distance when he thought he heard voices. He stopped and listened. The wind made a good deal of noise through the trees, but at the same time it brought the sound down to him. He was presently aware that two men were approaching him going in the direction of the creek where the raft-boat was moored. He didn't know of anybody that had a right to be abroad on their property at that hour of the night, so their presence interested him considerably, and he determined to lie in wait for them, and if possible, see who they were and find out what they were doing in that locality. So he stepped back into the bushes and waited for the two men to come up. There was no moon to aid him, and the sky was overcast and gusty-looking.

However, he knew all his neighbors so well that he believed he could identify the intruders if they came near enough to him to afford him a good look. The voices approached closer and closer, and the tones of one had a familiar ring to the boy.

Soon the two men came out from the shadow of the trees and passed within a few feet of Jack. There was not sufficient light for him to distinguish their features, but he knew them for all that. They were Nathan Plunkett and the man, by the name of Monks, and from the few words he picked out of their conversation Jack realized they were going down to the creek to look up the raft-boat and see if they could put it out of business.

"So that's the game you're on, Nathan Plunkett?" muttered Frost, wrathfully. "I'll see that you'll get all that's coming to you if you try to damage my boat. No doubt you fancy the craft

is left to itself at night, because two-legged serpents like yourself are not common in the neighborhood. "I'll just follow after you and see what didos you try to cut up. I'll have you in the rear, while Joe, who sleeps with one eye open ever since he established himself on board, will take you in the front. I'll bet we won't do a thing to you both."

Thus thought Jack as he followed the pair of rascals as fast as he dared go. The creek was reached at last, and Frost saw Plunkett and his companion standing a few feet away from the Golden Hope, examining her with a great deal of attention. Finally they stepped on board, and Plunkett, drawing aside the canvas covering which partly screened the opening to the cabin, looked into the place. He made a motion to Monks, who came to his side and looked in also. Jack judged they were looking at Joe, who, as he made no movement to resent the intrusion, was doubtless fast asleep. The rascals consulted together. They soon reached a decision, which evidently involved Beaseley, for they immediately pushed their way into the little deckhouse.

"They meant to do Joe up," breathed Jack. "It's time for me to butt in."

He grabbed a stout stick which lay close to him on the ground and dashed on board the raft-boat. There was a struggle going on in the cabin. Jack could hear some pretty strong language being used by the postmaster and Monks, but Joe didn't seem to be uttering a sound.

"I'm afraid they're getting the best of him," thought Frost, as he reached the deckhouse entrance. "I wish there was a light burning, so I could see how things look inside."

Evidently somebody else had the same desire to throw a light on the situation, for at that very moment a match was ignited, and by its glare Jack saw that it was Plunkett who had lit a lucifer and held it in his fingers, and he also made out that the two men had Beaseley face down on the deck, the storekeeper kneeling on his back, while Monks, who was a smoothly shaven youngish-looking man, had one of his hands over the boy's mouth. As the match expired in the storekeeper's fingers Jack dashed in and struck him a stunning blow on the head with his cudgel.

Plunkett fell half-dazed against the bunk out of which they had pulled Joe. Jack followed up his advantage by rapping Monks in a similar manner, though the blow was not so effectual. The fellow, however, was obliged to release his grip on Beaseley. Joe, finding he was no longer held at a serious disadvantage, struggled to his feet, encouraged by Jack's voice, and the two boys attacked the intruders in right down earnest.

CHAPTER X.—Off at Last.

The scrimmage which ensued in the gloom of the contracted deckhouse was sharp, short and decisive. Monks soon had all he wanted of it managing to extricate himself, he fled to the shore as fast as his legs could carry him and disappeared in the direction he and his companion had come. It was different with Plunkett. Jack's blow had put him out of business, and he became an easy victim. Frost struck a match and flashed the light in the postmaster's eyes.

"Well, Mr. Plunkett," he said, coolly, "what have you to say for yourself?"

The storekeeper evidently had nothing to say for himself, for he only scowled back at Jack and remained silent. While Joe blocked Plunkett's retreat by the doorway, Jack took down the lantern and lighted it. This cast a welcome illumination on the situation.

"Joe and I would be glad to know why you have honored us with your presence at this late hour of the night," said Jack, sarcastically.

"Let me pass, you young rascals," demanded Mr. Plunkett, aggressively.

"Certainly," replied Frost, with mock politeness, "after you have explained why you and your friend Monks boarded this raft and attacked my friend Joe Beaseley."

The postmaster flashed him an evil look.

"You young villain!" he exclaimed, vindictively. "You struck me with that stick you have in your hand. I'll have you in jail for assault the first thing in the morning."

"All right," replied the boy, cheerfully. "Do so, if you think it will pay you. But I guess we'll have something to say about your designs on this cargo of wheat which will make you look like thirty cents, and maybe land you in a cell."

Both boys stepped aside so the postmaster of Eden could pass out of the deckhouse. He never uttered a word as he took advantage of his opportunity. He was cornered and beaten to a standstill, and he knew it. But for all that he was just as dangerous as ever, and a desire for revenge rankled deep down in his heart. He stepped ashore in sulky defiance, and the last the boys saw of him was when his tall form vanished into the gloom of the night.

"I guess we'd better stand watch by turns tonight," said Jack. "I can't afford to take any chances with a pair of rascals like those two around loose in this neighborhood. They are capable of doing a heap of mischief in their present humor if they get the ghost of a chance."

Joe thought so, too, so for the rest of the night the boys in turn stood guard two hours at a stretch, until the morning sun brought the hired man down to tell them that an early breakfast awaited them at the farmhouse. Leaving Gray to watch the raft-boat, the boys went to the house, where they found Mrs. Harper waiting for them. After the meal she accompanied them to the wharf to see the boat off on its voyage which was to carry it down the "Father of Waters" to the city of St. Louis. The boys stepped aboard the raft-boat, and each took up a long pole as John Gray released the ropes which held the bow and stern of the craft to the wharf. As she began to move forward of her own accord, Jack took his place at the helm, and then both boys shouted farewell to Mrs. Harper and John Gray on the shore, waving their hats gleefully. Jack's aunt and the hired man waved their hands in return, and now the river voyage had actually begun.

"Down the river, down the river, down the O-hi-o!" howled Joe, feeling a strong desire to stand on his head through sheer happiness.

Jack was prepared to find that the raft-boat would display a strong tendency to whirl around in the current of the creek, which was fairly

rapid, and was now carrying them down toward Eden and the junction of Chippewa at a satisfactory speed. Although the young navigator had yet to learn even the art of managing a craft he soon found that the difficulty of keeping the craft head-on could readily be overcome by practice. A kind of "crow's nest" had been built on top of the small deckhouse, where the boys would have to take up their post, turn about, in order to keep a lookout ahead. Joe was the first, of course, to mount the "roost," as he called it. He couldn't get lonesome, for he was within easy talking distance of Jack. It was a nice, airy spot, and afforded an excellent view of the surrounding landscape. There was small danger of the raft meeting with any other craft, unless it might be a rowboat, on the creek. The stream was fairly broad and deep all the way to its junction with the Chippewa, five miles away.

It was nearly seven o'clock when they approached the steeples of Eden. As they floated past the town they became an object of interest and curiosity to a good many people, especially the boys of the neighborhood, who began to flock to the shore in considerable numbers as the news of the approach of the house-raft spread.

"Gee whiz!" grinned Joe. "Those kids act as if they'd never seen anything like this before in their lives."

"I don't believe they ever have," laughed Jack.

"Hi, hi, hi!" came out hails from the waterfront of Eden from the youngsters, who were following the course of the raft as they might a street procession.

"There are some girls waving their hands and handkerchiefs at us," said Joe, standing up and saluting the fair ones with his broad-brimmed hat.

"I see them," answered Frost, taking off his hat and bowing to the young ladies.

"I tell you, this is all to the mustard," said Beaseley, tickled to death over the sensation their appearance created.

"Come now, Joe," warned Jack. "You don't want to forget to attend to business. We're sliding into the Chippewa, and we may run foul of something if you don't keep your weather eye lifting."

"Nothing in the way, old man. We'll be in the river in a minute."

Jack knew that from the swing of the raft. In spite of all he could do, the raft was getting around broad-on to the current where it emptied into the Chippewa.

"Come down and lend a hand, will you, Joe?" he asked his assistant.

"Sure I will," replied Beaseley, cheerfully.

He quickly descended from his perch and gave Frost the benefit of his powerful muscles. Together they managed to prevent the raft from turning completely around, as she surely otherwise would have done. In a few minutes the Golden Hope was fairly launched into the middle of the more rapidly flowing Chippewa, and the raft floated along at a faster rate.

At that moment Jack saw a rowboat, with a couple of girls and a boy on board, put out from one of the small wharves and make directly for the raft-boat.

CHAPTER XI.—Miss Virginia Earle Visits the Golden Hope.

"I wonder who they are?" thought Frost. "They are rowing directly for us."

As the rowboat came nearer, and the faces of the girls became plainer, Jack uttered an exclamation of surprise and pleasure. He recognized Virginia Earle and her sister Jessie.

"Visitors!" ejaculated Beaseley, in surprise, letting go of the rudder-pole and rushing to the starboard side of the craft.

"Here, here!" shouted Jack. "Get back to your post, Joe, or we'll be stern-on in a moment."

He jumped down to help his companion regain control of the unwieldy boat. When this had been accomplished, he warned Beaseley against deserting the steering gear again and then walked over to the side to welcome the Earle girls.

"Good morning, Miss Earle," he said, politely lifting his hat.

"Good-morning, Mr. Frost. We've come out to see the Golden Hope," she laughed.

Jack assisted the two girls to the deck, after he had made the boat fast alongside by her painter, and the boy who had rowed them out stepped on board without any help.

"This is my cousin, Tom Waldron," said Virginia, introducing their companion.

"Glad to make your acquaintance, Tom. Let me make you known to my crew, Joe Beaseley."

The two boys shook hands.

"You're going all the way to St. Louis, aren't you?" said Waldron.

"That's what we are," replied Jack.

"I wish I were going along with you," he answered, wistfully.

"I wish you were, too," replied Frost, cheerfully.

"I wouldn't mind taking such a trip myself," smiled Virginia. "I suppose you expect to have a fine time?"

"We're going to have barrels of fun," grinned Beaseley.

"Boys do have such an advantage over us girls."

"You see now you made a mistake by being born a girl," chuckled Joe.

"I'm afraid I didn't have any say in the matter," replied Virginia, roguishly.

"I'm glad I ain't a girl, all right."

"Would you like to climb up to the crow's-nest, Miss Earle?" asked Jack, pointing to the lookout platform. "I'll help you up. You'll get a splendid view from there."

"Oh, my, is that what you call that place?"

"Yes. That's where we keep our lookout ahead."

"I don't know if I can get up there or not," she replied, doubtfully.

"Oh, yes, you can. Just give me your hand. It's only a short ladder, you see."

Thus encouraged, she permitted the young navigator to help her up.

"Isn't it grand!" she exclaimed, looking up and down and across the river. "I should just love to stay here all morning. It's almost as nice as being on a steamboat. So you and Joe Beaseley

actually built this boat between you," she added, looking at him admiringly. "Aren't you too smart for anything?"

"Now, Miss Earle—" protested Jack, though secretly delighted at her commendation.

"I mean it," she insisted. "My father says you're the smartest and bravest boy in Eden County, and I fully agree with him. I should be a most ungrateful girl if I didn't," she added, earnestly, and with a look into the boy's eyes which sent his blood leaping through his veins at a great rate. "For you saved my life in the most heroic manner, as well as the life of my dear sister."

"I can't deny that," stammered Jack, finding that words came very slow to him under the bewitching influence of her presence. "All I can say is—what I think I have said two or three times before—that I am glad I was able to help you when you needed help. I would do the same thing again for you if that were necessary."

"Thank you," she replied, casting down her eyes. "I believe you."

"I hope you will go out and call on my aunt while I am away. She thinks you the nicest—"

"Now you are getting complimentary," Virginia laughed.

"Oh, no," protested Jack. "It's the truth, because I think so, too," he added desperately.

She blushed up to her eyes and looked away.

"How long do you expect to be away?" she asked, presently.

"I can't say exactly. Probably two weeks or more."

"Then I shall look to see you a day or two after you get back, remember," she said, archly. "Now, please help me down. We really must go ashore right away. We haven't had our breakfast yet, and I know Tom will object to a long pull on an empty stomach."

Jack assisted her to the deck with as much care as though she were a princess of royal blood.

"Come, Jessie, Tom; it's time we put out for the shore. We must be all of half a mile below Eden."

They embarked, Jack doing the honors.

"Good-by, boys," cried Virginia, as her cousin, Tom Waldron, shoved the rowboat clear. "I hope you'll have a splendid time."

"Thanks, Miss Earle," replied Jack.

"Good-by, fellows. I'm dead sorry I'm not with you," floated back from Waldron, as he headed the boat to the shore and bent to his oars in a sturdy fashion.

Jack mounted once more to the lookout and noted that the river was clear as far ahead as he could see. At eight o'clock the boys changed places again, the arrangement being one-hour spells for each alternately at the helm. At twelve o'clock when Jack took his turn at steering, Joe started in to cook a pot of coffee. An inverted box served them for a table, on which some meat sandwiches, a whole pie and other "fixings" were spread out.

"Grub is ready," announced Joe in twenty minutes.

He squatted down on the deck while Jack took his meal standing, as it was out of the question to leave the helm to itself for any length of time.

"This isn't so bad," said Beaseley, cheerfully.

"These sandwiches beat anything I've tasted in a dog's age."

"They're all to the good, old man. Aunt Lucy has the knack of making the boss sandwiches on record. And her pies make one's mouth water just to look at them."

"You bet they do," acquiesced his companion. "This is a peach pie, I guess. If there's one pie I like better than another it is peach."

"I thought mince was your favorite?" grinned Jack.

"That's right. I forgot. Mince always goes to the right spot."

"How about pumpkin? I heard you say once that pumpkin pies were first favorites with you."

"Oh, come now, don't make me think of all the delicacies that I like. Almost all kinds of pie look alike to me when I come to eat them."

"You'd make a good pie-rate, wouldn't you?" laughed Jack.

"Sure pop. We ought to have brought a black flag with a skull and cross-bones painted on it to hoist at our masthead."

"What do you call our masthead?"

"One of those uprights on which we're going to display our colored lights when it grows dark."

Joe cleared away and washed the dishes, and then hied himself up to the crow's nest, from which perch he chinned with Jack until his companion called him down to steer for an hour.

"I guess I've got the hang of the thing now," said Beaseley. "By the time we reach the Mississippi I'll be able to steer with my eyes shut."

They passed one river steamboat about three o'clock, but she was only a small affair, a freighter. Altogether the river seemed to be singularly clear of boats or vessels of any description. The sun set about six, and shortly afterward Joe piped to supper. At seven the colored lights were hoisted into place, and the white light was hung in the lookout station, exactly between the other lanterns. Darkness gradually settled down deep and solemn over the face of the landscape and river. There were many lights on either shore to guide them on their way.

"We must be careful to keep to the middle of the stream, as near as we can guess," said Jack, or the first thing we know we may find ourselves ashore. If the tide happened to be high at the time we'd be in a pretty fix, unless we succeeded in poling ourselves clear right away."

"Get your banjo, Jack, and let's have some music," said Joe.

So Frost got his instrument out of the deck-house, tunned up, and presently the strains of a lively dance were floating on the still evening air. Then he sang several popular songs, Joe joining in on the chorus.

"Better turn in now, Joe," said Jack, as he relieved his companion at the rudder. "We commence our four-hour watches now. I'll wake you at midnight. Then you are to call me at four." "I don't feel a bit sleepy. Guess I'll stay awake a while longer."

"You can do as you please, but it's your funeral, you know."

At half-past eight Beaseley took possession of the one bunk and in five minutes was sound asleep.

On Sunday morning they drew near a big Iowa town, and as the weather looked threatening Jack decided to put in and moor his craft to a small vacant wharf he spied ahead. After a strenuous time this was accomplished. Joe put on a rain-coat and stepped ashore, starting for the town, returning after some time with his arms full of eatables. Jack decided to stop at this place all night. During the afternoon they decided to purchase a sail Joe had seen for sale at a boat-house a little farther down the river and rig it up. They thought it would help them make better time. The boys slept well and arose early the next morning.

CHAPTER XII.—The End of the Trip.

After breakfast they unmoored and worked the Golden Hope down to the boat-house. The boys went ashore and found the man Joe had spoken to the previous afternoon. Jack had a talk with him, told him how he thought the sail he wanted to set might be made available, and the man went aboard the raft-boat and, after examining the supports, gave them the benefit of some valuable suggestions. He had some pulley-blocks and a quantity of stout line he was willing to sell them, so Jack made a bargain with him, and under his directions they went to work to carry out Joe's idea in an effective manner. They braced the uprights in a satisfactory way, and to the top of each attached a pulley-block and rove a line through them. The man furnished a thin pole as a yard for the sail, and to each end of this pole they secured the small clothes-line pulleys which they had previously used at the peaks of the uprights to hoist the lanterns with. The line was put through these pulleys, and thus by pulling simultaneously on the line on each side of the boat, the sail could be raised about five feet above the sloping roof of the grain house. A piece of line was fastened to each of the lower corners of the sail, by which it was secured to each of the uprights. As the sail could only be spread in one position, they could not hope to obtain the best results; but when the wind blew with a favorable slant Jack judged it was bound to accelerate their speed down the big river.

And so it proved. That afternoon the wind came pretty fresh from the northwest. The boy hoisted the sail, and both were delighted with the satisfactory outcome of the experiment.

"We must be making all of five miles an hour now," said Jack, at length.

"Bet your boots we are," chuckled Joe. "I ain't such a lunkhead, after all, I guess."

"I take my hat off to you, Beaseley," replied the young skipper, with a mock salute. "You're all to the good, old man."

"Sure I am. I'm the real persimmon, and don't you make any mistake about it. We're going to cut our trip down a couple of days."

"I guess we will, if the wind blows fair for us."

With the sail drawing well, they found that the labor of steering was reduced more than one-half. The raft-boat showed no tendency to whirr around, and it was really a pleasure to steer her, so Beaseley declared. Neither were they obliged to follow the current in its broad sweeps around the bends of the river, and they

saved many miles by taking short cuts. They gained still another advantage. The raft-boat was under better control when the sail was in operation, and, instead of being entirely at the mercy of the current, they could go where they chose. This enabled Jack to make frequent stops to provision up when there was any wind, and it came from the right direction, for he could make a landing when and where he pleased, and with little difficulty. Now, with a good wind, they covered about a hundred miles in twenty-four hours, while when they had to depend upon the current they made but sixty. About seven in the morning of the eighth day they reached Hannibal, Missouri.

As soon as Jack found out the name of the big place on the western shore of the river he was in high glee.

"We have made much better time than I expected we would," he remarked to Joe. "Why, if we have the wind with us we ought to reach St. Louis to-morrow afternoon."

"You don't mean it," cried Beaseley, much astonished. "Why, I thought we were good for a week yet."

"No, sir. We're about one hundred and fifty miles from our destination by water."

"Glory! Who'd have thought it?"

"Aren't you glad, Joe?"

"I don't know, I've had a fine time sailing down, I wouldn't care if we were going back the same way."

"That's out of the question."

"I suppose it is. But, to tell the truth, I'm sorry to have to leave the old craft so soon. It took a lot of hard work to build her, and we don't know if we can sell her for anything more than firewood."

"Oh, you can't tell. I'll bet there are a good many people who would be glad to buy so substantial a craft if they could get her as cheap as we're willing to sell her. The trouble is to reach those people."

"You might advertise her."

"I'll consider the matter. Now, Joe, I'm going to put in here for a short time at one of the wharves, I want to find out the price of wheat. Two days ago it was one dollar and forty-eight cents per bushel. It ought to be one dollar and fifty cents now."

"Your aunt is going to make a good thing out of her grain this year."

"Well, she needs to. You know, two thousand dollars of it goes to Mr. Plunkett inside of two weeks."

With the assistance of the sail they worked the Golden Hope in to a vacant wharf, made fast, and Jack went ashore. He bought some stationery, wrote and mailed a letter to his aunt, telling her they and the wheat were all right up to that point, and that they were within a day and a half's journey of St. Louis. He purchased the chief daily of Hannibal and found that wheat had risen to one dollar and fifty-four cents. They had finished dinner next day, and Joe was washing up the dishes, when they reached the mouth of the Missouri River. Jack was first to notice that the river was widening out to a great extent. In a very short time they appeared to have the center of a great inland sea.

"Gee whiz!" exclaimed Joe, after he had finish-

ed his work and had time to look about him at the changed surroundings. "Where have we got to? We must have passed St. Louis in the night and are heading into the Gulf of Mexico."

"Go on, child," replied Jack, laughing. "What you see now is the mouth of the Missouri River. We're only a few miles above the city of St. Louis. We'll be hauled up alongside the levee before dark."

Joe gazed open-mouthed around. They had grown accustomed to meet and pass lots of craft of all kinds of late, but the number they were now in the midst of cast the previous day's experiences altogether in the shade. Great steam-boats raced madly past the raft-boat beside which the Golden Hope looked like a mere cork. Huge flatboats floated lazily down the river, and the scene became more lively and exciting as they advanced. At last the metropolis of Missouri opened out before their eyes—their port of destination, with its dense mass of houses, its busy levee, its towering elevators, in which millions of bushels of grain were stored at that moment, and its crowd of steamboats and other craft lined along the waterfront. It was a wonderful scene to Joe Beaseley, who was not used to city life, as was Jack Frost.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed. "This beats anything I ever saw."

At five o'clock they obtained a place to moor the boat temporarily, and then they went to a nearby restaurant and had supper. They were both satisfied and happy, for they had successfully accomplished a somewhat remarkable feat—floating a large quantity of wheat in a home-made craft from Eden County, Wisconsin, to St. Louis, Missouri, in nine days and a half.

CHAPTER XIII.—Conclusion.

Jack made inquiries early next morning about where he should find commission grain merchants, and was referred to the street where a great many of these merchants had their places of business. When he and Joe were on their way to the restaurant at which they proposed to breakfast, he bought a couple of morning dailies from a newsboy. After giving their order at the table, the first thing both boys did was to look up the price of wheat. It was quoted at one dollar and sixty cents per bushel. It didn't take much figuring to show that their load would fetch something over three thousand two hundred dollars, less commission.

"Hadn't we better hold on a few days, Jack? It might rise to one dollar and seventy-five cents, or even two dollars."

"No, Joe. The present price is good enough for me. Aunt Lucy will clear three thousand over all expenses. That's a thousand dollars more than she expected to get."

"All right, Jack. It's your wheat."

"Suppose it was yours?"

"I'd wait two days more, at any rate."

"I'm not taking any chances, Joe, now that I have arrived on the ground. Something might happen to our cargo if I waited."

"Why, what could happen to it now? We're moored to the levee, as they call it, aren't we?"

"Oh, I don't mean to say that I think anything would happen to it, but, you know, the unexpected is always liable to happen."

The words were hardly out of his mouth before he suddenly clutched his companion's arm and looked over his shoulder towards the front of the restaurant.

"Mr. Plunkett and his friend Monks have just come into the restaurant and have taken the first table."

"What the deuce are they doing in St. Louis?"

"I'm afraid they've come here to try and do us up on the wheat."

"Ha! How can they?"

"Now you've got me. We must wait till they've gone, then you must hurry back to the raft and stand watch over it while I rush off and fetch a commission man down to make the sale."

They ate the meal slowly, Jack keeping a sharp eye on the first table, where his enemy and Monks were apparently enjoying their breakfast. At length the two men rose, went to the counter, settled for the meal and walked out on the street.

"Keep your eye on them, Joe, while I pay these checks."

In half a minute he rejoined his companion outside.

"Which way did they go?" he asked.

"Toward the levee," answered Joe.

"They are on the lookout for the Golden Hope as sure as you're alive. Now, hustle off with you, and don't let them see you. If they spot our craft, don't let them on board, if you have to slug both of them to prevent it."

"All right, Jack. I'll knock the daylights out of them if they monkey with me."

They parted at once, and Jack took his way to the district where the commission merchants had their stores. The boy selected one place at random, entered the store and asked to see the head of the house. He was directed to step into the private office. He did so, and lost not a moment in stating his business.

"I have two thousand bushels of wheat alongside the levee at the foot of Blank street. Do you want to buy it at the prevailing market rate?" the boy said to the merchant.

"Whom do you represent, Mr. Frost?"

"My aunt, Mrs. Harper, of Eden County, Wisconsin."

"Have you brought the wheat all the way from that State?"

"Yes, sir; by water."

"The wheat is in bulk, of course?"

"I will give you one dollar and sixty cents per bushel for it."

"It's yours, sir," said Jack, promptly.

"I'll send a representative with you to examine the grain and, if it is in first-class condition, to close the deal."

"All right, sir."

In five minutes a bright young man was summoned and introduced to Jack. The merchant gave him his orders, and the young man started for the levee with Jack. When they reached the foot of Blank street they found a crowd gathered about a certain part of the levee, just at the

point where Jack knew the Golden Hope was tied up. They pushed their way to the front, to find Mr. Plunkett and Monks trying to effect a lodgment on the wheat-boat, while Joe Beasley was standing them off with the short pole which had done service as a yard for their sail.

Jack rushed to his friend's aid, and in the struggle which ensued Mr. Plunkett was tumbled into the river, from which he was rescued, a melancholy looking object, by a longshoreman. He and Monks retired from the scene much crest-fallen and swearing to take vengeance on the spunky boy. Jack explained the cause of the scrimmage to the astonished representative of the commission house, who declared the rascals ought to be arrested. He then examined the wheat, found it came up to all requirements, and the deal was closed.

Arrangements were at once made with the captain of a tug close by to tow the Golden Hope to Elevator D, belonging to a certain big firm, and the young man and the two boys went along. After the grain had been absorbed and automatically measured by the elevator, the boat was towed back to her former moorings and Jack went back to the store to get the money. The merchant kindly permitted his young man to accompany Jack to the bank and procure for him a draft on the Eden National Bank for the three thousand odd dollars the wheat came to.

When he returned to the boat he found Joe talking to a stranger. This man wanted to charter the raft-boat to take a load of lime down to a small town at the junction of the Ohio River, and after some conversation Jack offered to deliver the stuff for a certain sum, which was accepted. It took the Golden Hope two days to deliver the lime at its destination. Then, while Jack was wondering what he was going to do with his craft, he received a satisfactory offer for her and accepted it.

That night he and Joe started by express for Eden, Wisconsin, where they arrived in due time, and hustled out at once for the farm. Mrs. Harper insisted on presenting Jack with two hundred and fifty dollars as a substantial recognition, in addition to his wages, of the interest he displayed in the welfare of the farm.

Jack did not fail to call on Virginia Earle right away after his return, as he had promised to do, and was most graciously received not only by the young lady herself, but by her family as well. In due time Jack Frost personally took up the mortgage on his aunt's farm and forever relieved her of any further connection with Mr. Nathan Plunkett. When he reached his eighteenth year his aunt presented him with a half interest in the farm, assuring him that it would all be his at her death.

At twenty-one Jack attended his own wedding in the town of Eden, and the bride was Virginia Earle, just as everybody who had watched the course of events since Frost returned from his trip to St. Louis in the Golden Hope said it would be. To-day Jack Frost is one of the most prosperous farmers of Western Wisconsin.

Next week's issue will contain "STRUCK OIL; or, THE BOY WHO MADE A MILLION."

CURRENT NEWS

BOLIVIA'S CLIMATE

At Alto Crucero, in Bolivia, water freezes every night of the year, while at noonday the sun is sometimes hot enough to blister the flesh.

SHOOTS EAGLE; GETS TURKEY

Charles Mandeville, hunting on the Sines Farm immediately north of West Chicago, took a shot at a large bird rising into the air with a cargo in its talons. The bird fell and proved to be a brown eagle with a wing-spread of seven feet. It weighed twenty-two pounds and had been carrying a turkey of very near its own weight. Mandeville ate the turkey on Thanksgiving Day.

APES AS COIN-TESTERS

Apes are being used to sort good coins from bad in Siam.

The Siamese have always been fond of apes as pets, and the creatures become very intelligent owing to their association with human beings. They are trained to do many wonderful things, but coin-testing is the most wonderful of all.

In almost every shop an ape sits beside the merchant. Each coin is handed to the animal, who tries it with his teeth. If it is good the ape throws it into the money-box. If it is bad he

throws it on the floor, making weird noises to signify his anger.

The apes never make a mistake. Even the most carefully-made counterfeit coins do not pass their inspection. A curious feature of this business is that no white man has been able to discover how the animals are taught to tell good money from bad.

INCA FINDER'S SKILL USEFUL IN RUM HUNT

F. A. Hazeltine, Divisional Prohibition Chief for the Florida-Porto-Rico area, several years ago, walked over the sands of Peru, poking here and there with an iron rod. He was searching for the mummies of Incas. Now he has been poking into the sands around Fernandina, Fla., with a like rod, with uncomfortable results for rum smugglers.

"Pits are dug in the sand by the smugglers and walled up inside," Mr. Hazeltine reported to Prohibition headquarters, "with a hole at the top just large enough to admit a man. A board is placed over this hole and sand and leaves are used to camouflage it. However, once the place is located, the sand can be easily penetrated by an iron rod. Most of the pits hold about 150 cases."

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CHAPTER XVI.—(Continued).

"He's Glick, all right," said Jack. "He'll come when he gets good and ready, I suppose. "Ask him what has become of the master, Art."

Arthur called the question, but received no answer, neither were the footsteps heard again.

Presently, Pedro came to them.

"Hasn't the boss come back yet?" he asked.

"No," replied Jack, "but Dr. Glick is in the garden, or was a minute ago. He wouldn't come to us, though, and we couldn't get anything out of him."

"Nobody can, unless he wants to talk. I'm the best. I'll go and look for him."

"Take the lantern then," replied Jack. "Look out for yourself, now!"

But Pedro soon returned with word that he could find nothing of the man physician.

It was now ten o'clock, and Jack found himself sorely puzzled to know what to do.

"I ought to go after the boss, Pedro," he said.

"Did he tell you where he was going?" asked the Mestizo, curiously. "He didn't tell me."

"Yes, he told me, but I suppose I must not tell."

"Don't, if he told you not to."

"It's a certain place over beyond the lake on the cliffs."

"Is it? You could never find it in the dark."

"That's what I'm afraid of."

"Likely they've killed the boss and Miss Edna too. They are every one of them crazy. It's a bad job."

"And your father, Pedro?" asked Arthur, quietly.

"He was crazy, too, senor. Now don't ask me any questions, for I won't answer, unless the boss gives me leave."

"But suppose he really is dead?" said Jack.

"Then I'll tell all I know. It isn't much, anyhow."

"What ought I to do, Art?" sighed Jack. "I'm as nervous as an old woman with it all."

"Would you go, if it wasn't for me, Jack?"

"I surely would."

"Then don't mind me. Go! Pedro will look out for me. I'm mighty tired. I think I'll go right to bed."

"Will you watch till I get back, Pedro?" Jack asked.

"I sure will, senor, but if they got the boss and hindered him from coming back, what about you? It's a chance, if you ever get there."

"Come, come!" cried Arthur, "you want to de-

cide one way or the other. Remember Edna, and go."

"I'll leave you the revolver."

"As you will. I'd sooner you took it, though."

"No. I won't stand for that. Pedro, are those men armed?"

"Senor, I don't know any more than you do. The boss has two rifles and a revolver. I don't know where he keeps them, and I don't think they did, but they must have had something to shoot Andy with."

"And they have my revolver which they took from him," added Arthur. "Jack, will you go, if you are going?"

"Yes, but I won't take the revolver," replied Jack, and he handed the weapon to his chum, picked up the lantern, and started.

"Good-by!" called Arthur.

"I won't say it," he called back.

"Good luck, then!"

"Same to you."

"Good luck from me, too," Pedro shouted.

"Take good care of him, Pedro," answered Jack, and that was the last of him.

"I suppose you are awful hungry, senor," said Pedro. "I've found a few eggs. Shall I cook you some?"

"Why, yes; but why didn't you say so before Jack left?" replied Arthur. "He's just as hungry as I am."

"Senor, it just went out of my head, with all the talk. Remember, I'm worried half out of my wits, too. There never happened anything like this before."

Pedro boiled the eggs, and Arthur ate two with a few crusts of stale bread, and, after that retired to his room, where he stretched himself on the bed without removing his clothes.

Just how long he slept he had no idea, when suddenly he was awakened by a thundrous crack, and the whole house shook.

Arthur got his game leg off the bed, and himself into a sitting position, without losing an instant.

His heart almost stood still, when he heard Pedro yelling: "Oh, don't kill me! Don't kill me!"

Louder yells—a series of them—followed in a different voice.

"It must be the doctor. What on earth shall I do?" thought the unfortunate boy.

He groped for his cane, got it, and staggered to his feet.

"Everything depends upon my coolness," he reflected. "I must help Pedro if I can."

The yelling had now ceased. Arthur flung open the door. There was no key to the lock.

Down at the other end of the long corridor, he could see Dr. Glick, wearing his rusty old plug advancing with a lighted lantern in his left hand, and a drawn sword in the right.

He caught sight of Arthur on the instant, and, waving the sword, yelled:

"Hoo! Hoo! Hoo! Hoo! I am King Death! I've just killed one boy, and now I'm going to kill another. Young What's-your-name, prepare to meet thy fate!"

He came on the run.

Poor Arthur was at the mercy of a madman.

(To be continued.)

GOOD READING

BURGLARS GET A BAG OF PEANUTS

Youthful cracksmen with a sense of humor made an unsuccessful attempt to rob the safe in a large furniture house. After rummaging desk drawers they made off with a bag of salted peanuts as their sole loot. Besides the safe they left a note which read: "We can't get in."

GIRL TRAPS HOTEL CLERK

Gladys Ward, a 20-year-old model, living at the Hotel Stratford in West Thirty-second street, New York, told in Yorkville Court how she helped the manager of the hotel, George Remus, arrest a clerk on a charge of fraud.

The clerk, Joseph Barrett, she said, offered to help her escape payment of a bill of \$200 and get her baggage out of the hotel. She told Remus of the offer, she said, and trapped the clerk with the aid of \$60 in marked money that Remus had provided.

Barrett was held in \$500 bail for Special Sessions.

CURRENCY RAID TRAP BEGGAR AS RICHEST MAN

The richest man caught in Munich in recent raids of local cafes for foreign currency was a professional beggar who specializes in seeking alms from foreigners. In his pockets the police found 300,000 Austrian kronen, 150,000 Czechoslovak kronen, 20 Swiss francs, 101 Italian lire and a dollar bill.

Begging has become so common now that many people carry small bills to meet the pleas of mendicants who stand on street corners with extended hats and hands.

A Leipzig workman who recently sat down on a park bench on his way home from work fell asleep. His hat slid off and landed crown down in front of him. When he awoke he found it full of small mark notes which passers-by had tossed into it.

KANGAROO BIRTH PUZZLE SOLVED

A kangaroo at birth weighs about eight or nine grains, is a trifle more than an inch long and not much thicker than an ordinary lead pencil, according to George F. Morse, Jr., of the Chicago Zoological Society.

How the baby kangaroo was born was until recently a mystery to zoologists, Mr. Morse said, because being a pouch animal the actual birth was difficult to witness.

"One day I noticed that one of our kangaroos was acting strangely, so I got the head keeper to put it in a separate room used for the observation of animals," Mr. Morse declared. "We watched closely for a long time and finally were rewarded by the appearance of a tiny thing not more than an inch long on the tail of the mother kangaroo. It was a baby."

"We secured it and found it weighed about nine grains. It was an inch and one-sixteenth long and not broader than a lead pencil. It was a perfectly formed kangaroo with the exception of the hind legs, the matured kangaroos' powerful

propeller. These developed later as the baby animal grew. The front legs, however, were perfectly formed and were used by the baby to climb back into the mother's pouch, where it remains for a period of seven months."

PULL THE TEETH WITH FINGERS

Although the Chinese boast that nothing is new to them, and that all the arts and sciences are old stories in China, it is still true that for operations in dentistry we would hardly care to go to a Chinese.

The work of old-time Chinese dentists is ludicrously primitive. The operator extracts all teeth with his fingers. From youth to manhood he is trained to pull pegs from a wooden board, and this training changes the aspect of the hand and gives him a finger grip that is equivalent to a lifting power of three or four hundred pounds.

For toothache he employs opium, peppermint oil, cinnamon oil and clove oil. Sometimes he fills teeth, but he does it so poorly that the fillings fall out after a few months.

There is an element of superstition in his work, for he asserts that all dental troubles are brought on by tooth worms, and he always shows the nerve pulp to the patient as such a worm. For humbugging purposes also the dentist carries about in his pocket some white grubs, and after he has extracted a tooth he shows a grub to the sufferer as the cause of all the trouble. A dentist of this class is regarded by his countrymen as half way between a barber and a laborer in the social scale, which is certainly a great injustice to an honest laborer.

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INTERESTING RADIO NEWS AND HINTS

PAINT AND VARNISH

The use of paint should be avoided in radio work. Even varnish should be left alone, as both of these will form an imperfect dielectric and increase distributed capacity, thereby lowering the efficiency of the set. This pertains to the making of coils such as tuning coils, variometers and couplers.

BAD CONDENSERS

A short circuit in a fixed condenser or variable condenser may be easily detected by aid of a dry cell and telephone receiver. If a loud click is heard in the phones when placed in series with the condenser, it is a sure sign that the condenser is short circuited somewhere. Usually in the variable type this can be easily detected by looking over the plates to find out where one plate is touching another.

GET RID OF INTERFERENCE

A regenerative receiving set acts as a miniature transmitter, and if carelessly handled will cause interference. Many of the howls heard in the phones are not due to the receiving set, but to some neighbor turning the dials of his set. Much of this trouble can be eliminated by burning the filament of the detector at minimum brilliancy to hear the desired concert. This will not only prevent interference but will give the tube and batteries longer life.

USE A SIMPLE TUNER

A simple means of tuning a crystal detector set is afforded by the variometer, a piece of apparatus widely known as one of the instruments that comprise a form of regenerative receiving set. This piece of apparatus in its simplest form is easy to make; the parts necessary for its construction may usually be picked up about the house.

A tube made from an ordinary oatmeal box will serve nicely as the fixed coil or stator. This should be about four inches in length and two and one-half inches in diameter. The rotor should be made from a smaller tube of the same material but smaller in order that it may rotate freely inside of the stator.

WIRED WIRELESS COMMUNICATION

A publication giving an introduction to wired wireless or fine radio communication has recently been prepared under the direction of the chief signal officer with the co-operation of the Bureau of Standards. This pamphlet gives an explanation of how messages are carried to distant points by radio-frequency currents directed over wires such as ordinary telephone lines or power lines. The fundamental principles of radio and its relations to line radio telegraphy and telephony are also discussed. This pamphlet is "Introduction to Line Radio Communication," Signal Corps Radio Communication Pamphlet No. 41, a copy of which may be obtained for 10 cents from the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

A DANGEROUS STUNT

Audio frequency amplifying transformers have a very annoying habit of blowing out most unexpectedly, even when the value of "B" battery used is only normal, or even below normal. The fan will without thinking condemn the particular brand he has as a poor one, but the fault is just as likely to be his own.

If a transformer does not blow out the first time it is connected in a circuit there is no reason why it should ever blow, providing, of course, that an excess of plate voltage is not applied. One good reason why many reputable instruments go dead is that the plate circuit is often opened too suddenly. If the tube filaments are lighted at the usual operating temperature, this action will cause the development of a very high voltage in the transformer windings. This "inductive kick" voltage, as it is popularly known, lasts only an instant, but that is usually time enough for the very fine wire to burn out.

To avoid such accidents, the rheostats should be turned down before the telephone plug is removed. If a habit is made of this practice, the amplifier will work without trouble.

NOW THE RADIO PLAY

Radio dramas have been broadcasted by the WGY station of the General Electric Company at Schenectady for nearly a year. During that period the little group of WGY players has had the largest audiences ever before accorded dramatic offerings. There are at least 2,000,000 radio sets in the country, and of that number 1,500,000 are almost nightly within range of WGY. From the very first the radio drama has been a success. Mr. Edward H. Smith, formerly an actor and director on the professional stage, has been handling this feature of the WGY programs. Mr. Smith and his players have pioneered in the art of the radio drama; they have had to develop a new technique. It has been found necessary to make occasional changes in play manuscripts, especially where a climax depended upon sight for its appreciation. The entrance to or departure from a room by one of the characters has to be indicated by sound, as a closing door. A bell helps somewhat in announcing a newcomer to the invisible stage. Various sound devices have been created to produce atmosphere. A telegraph key and an imitation of an engine whistle have helped in a railway station scene. Storms have been stimulated by devices similar to those used on the stage.

CONTROLLING GENERATION

If the grid and plate circuits of a vacuum tube are coupled together so that the energy can be fed back from the plate circuit into the grid circuit the tube will oscillate. When a tube oscillates it serves as a transmitter and is of no value for receiving. To be of use for reception the circuit must be so adjusted that the tube is just at the point of oscillating. How to recognize the critical point is a puzzle to many.

The easiest way to determine whether the tube

is oscillating is to short circuit the grid condenser with a piece of wire, and touch the grid terminal of the socket. If a distinct click is heard in the phones when the finger touches the terminal and another click when it is removed, the circuit is oscillating.

There is no oscillation without regeneration. Regeneration is controlled by the tickler; the amount of current flowing in the filament circuit, the amount of plate voltage and, in some sets, chiefly radio frequency a potentiometer is employed to keep the amplifying tubes just below the point of oscillation. Adjustment of the plate variometer or other means of feedback; regulation of the "A" battery rheostat and by adding or removing "B" batteries from the circuit play important parts in the reception of clear music.

THE JAPANESE RADIO LINK

The radio telegraph circuit between the United States and Japan is operated continuously, carrying a large portion of the trans-Pacific telegraph traffic. When the recent disastrous earthquake devastated Tokio and Yokohama the radio service was not interrupted. The first news of the disaster came to the United States over this radio circuit, and for several days thereafter the most complete dispatches describing the extent of the losses and damage came via the Radio Corporation service. There are several Japanese stations working with America. First, there is the Iwaki radio system, owned and operated by the Japanese Government, comprising a transmitting station at Haranomachi and a receiving station at Tomioka. The general location of these stations was determined by the comparative freedom of the district from seismic disturbances. The transmitting aerial at Haranomachi is of the umbrella type, supported by a self-supporting central tower and an outer ring of 18 spliced, guyed wooden masts at a radius of 1,300 feet. The central tower is a reinforced concrete tube 660 feet high, 57 feet in outside diameter at the base and 14 feet outside diameter at the top. The wooden masts in the outer ring are 250 feet high and consist of three sections.

TUBES FIT BATTERIES

Dry cells are used extensively for vacuum tube filament current by amateurs who do not care for the storage battery.

The dry battery is a fairly good substitute, but its use is not advised except with certain tubes because these cells soon become exhausted and must be replaced. This continual replacement soon mounts up to the cost of a storage battery.

A number of flashlight batteries may be connected and used for the plate voltage of the tube.

Different uses require different values of voltage and amperage. A vacuum tube of the storage battery type requires a pressure of 6 volts and a filament current of one ampere. Recently there has appeared on the market other types of tubes that require smaller voltages and a lesser filament current. Dry cells can be used successfully with these tubes.

Most dry cell tubes require a small amount of filament current but the voltage must be watched. In the case of the UV201 A and C301 A tube a 6 volt battery will have to be secured and used

with a resistance of 30 ohms. This also applies to the UV199 tube when using 6 volts. Therefore in order to apply dry cells to these tubes a combination of dry cells in series is required in order to obtain the correct voltage.

VOLTAGE CONTROL

The various detector tubes require careful adjustment of the plate battery for their proper operation. There are no two tubes that possess the same characteristics either in the filament current or plate supply. It is easy for any one to make adjustments on the filament since the rheostats give fine control of the current; in fact, for micrometer adjustment vernier rheostats may be employed.

Vernier rheostats in some cases have an extra arm built in the same shaft as the regular arm and travel over a single wire tightening around the body of the instrument. Other rheostats of the micrometer type are composed of a carbon resistance embodying the principle of compressed carbon granules.

High voltage batteries referred to as plate batteries or B batteries can be had in tapped or untapped form. The tapped battery has five or more taps fastened in a composition of wax. Each one of these posts is connected to a cell in the battery so that by connecting leads to different posts various values of voltage can be secured. There is also an additional post in the corner of the battery which is the other connection of the battery, usually the negative post.

In order to jump from one post to another, a test clip of some form can be used, but it is more convenient to put five contact points on a switch arm on the panel of the set in which condition the variation of voltage may be obtained by simply turning the arm or knob. This entails a little work, but is compensated for by the ease and rapidity with which tubes can be tested to determine the relative efficiency of different types.

If the switch arm is so wide or the contact points so close together that the blade touches two posts at the same time the cell between these two posts will be short circuited. Care, then, should be taken to see that the points are kept apart with each other.

Another valuable piece of apparatus to be added to a vacuum tube outfit is the battery potentiometer. This give fine adjustment on the tube and is most important when employed with radio frequency sets. The battery potentiometer comes in two sizes—200 ohms and 400 ohms. The 200 ohms is satisfactory when used with straight regenerative receivers. The ends of the winding are connected directly across the A or filament lighting battery while the arm is the common post for the input and output circuits of the tube. The potentiometer, despite its high resistance, acts as drain on the battery, therefore to do away with this loss it is essential to have the instrument connected only when the set is in operation. For this reason a double pole switching arrangement is made.

Before making any adjustments set the arm at the middle of the winding. Then proceed to experiment with the other tube controls. Listen in for a while and move the potentiometer arm slowly until signal strength is increased.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 21, 1923

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

BLIND INSECTS DAMAGE POLES

The latest enemies of the public utility company are insects. Blind ants and carpenter bees are engaging the attention of electrical men throughout the country. The insects are causing much damage to electric light poles. They enter the pole below the ground, eating their way through poles all the way to the top. Being blind, they instinctively seem to shun the light and confine their operations beneath the surface. Methods of checking the devastation are being considered.

VELOCITY OF LIGHT

Light traveling at the rate of 186,000 miles a second requires eight minutes to come from the sun to the earth and four and one-half years to cross the space between us and the nearest star. The Hercules star system is so far distant the light that left it 36,000 years ago has only just reached the earth, while there is another globular cluster that is distant more than 200,000 light years from the earth. A light year is nearly six million miles.

MYSTERY BOTTLE FORECASTS WEATHER

French scientists have found something to puzzle over in a mysterious bottle that is owned by a French farmer and that is said to be an infallible weather forecaster. The bottle has been handed down from generation to generation and is filled with what appears to be a red sand and a yellow liquid. So famed has the bottle become and so reliable that it is said farmers in the vicinity invariably consult it before starting to harvest their crops.

Solid particles gather in clusters when rain is coming, and white flakes appear before snow. The entire mixture becomes cloudy when a hail storm is coming.

A BOY STOIC

Sherman Yoder, eight, who accidentally shot himself in the leg and then suffered all night rather than tell his mother, lay in a hospital in

Sunbury, Pa., worrying because he could not attend school.

Sherman, son of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Yoder of Shamokin, received a certificate from the State Department of Education last year for punctual attendance. This year he was to have received a gold seal, and the loss of it seems to worry him more than the wound.

Sherman was playing with his father's pistol while his parents were away. After shooting himself, he told his brother and sister not to tell and went to bed. His younger brother, however, explained to the mother why Sherman groaned during the night.

"If I had obeyed mother the accident wouldn't have happened," Sherman said to-day. "I just see now how near I was to death, and I might have killed my little brother and sister. I won't get my gold seal now. I am very sorry, but I am sure I will never play with a pistol again."

LAUGHS

"The true secret of success is to find out what the people want." "And then give it to them?" "No; corner it."

New Boarder—What's the row upstairs?
Landlady—It's that professor of hypnotism trying to get his wife's permission to go out this evening.

Mrs. Casey—Sure, th' goat has ate all av Maggie's piano music. Mr. Casey—Thank heavens! Now, if he'd only ate th' pianny, Oi'd pension him for loife!

"My doctor told me that paper money is simply alive with germs." "He did?" "Yes, and then he accepted a two-dollar bill for giving me the information."

"I'm glad we didn't get any duplicates," said the bride as they inspected the wedding gifts. "I wouldn't mind if somebody would duplicate that check your father gave us," replied the bridegroom.

Romantic Old Maid—Tell me, have you ever picked up any bottles on the beach? Boatman—Werry often, miss! Romantic Old Maid—And have you found anything in them? Boatman—Not a blessed drop, miss.

Mrs. Newedd (complainingly)—When we go anywhere now, we have to take the old street car. Before our marriage you always called a taxi. Newedd—Yes; that's the reason we have to take a street car now.

Sleeping-car Porter—Had a pleasant trip, sah? Passenger (getting into his overcoat)—Delightful! Porter—Nothin' happened to mar youah pleasure, sah? Passenger—Nothing whatever. Came through safe and sound. Porter (insinuatingly)—Sometimes gemmen likes to give a small fee, sah, to— Passenger—Good idea. I'll hand something to the engineer.

INTERESTING ARTICLES

RADIO WAVES REACH MARS, BUT TAKE TIME

The question has often been raised as to whether it will ever be possible to communicate by wireless with the inhabitants of other planets. The wireless waves in the ether go on forever, so there will be no reason why people cannot communicate with other planets if the inhabitants have the proper receiving apparatus. Some of the planets, however, are so far away that electric waves traveling at a speed of 106,000,000 miles per second would take several thousand years to reach them. There is very little chance of these remote planets hearing the nightly radio concerts sent out from the wireless test station at the East Pittsburgh works of the Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company. They are now known to several thousand amateurs all over the United States, and having a wave length of 330 meters, are readily picked up.

FIVE-YEAR ARCTIC EXPEDITION PLANNED

One of the most elaborate polar expeditions ever undertaken is now being planned by Capt. Robert A. Bartlett, commander of the *Roosevelt*, on which Admiral Peary made his voyage toward the North Pole. The trip will be made to explore a water route northeastward from Alaskan waters through the Arctic regions, and will probably leave Seattle next June or July, pass through Bering Strait, and drift eastward with the ice to Greenland or Spitzbergen. It will require five years for the trip, according to Captain Bartlett.

The party of ten will make up the expedition, which will sail in a wooden non-magnetic ship. Instruments for surveying the northern regions, sounding the depths of the Arctic Ocean and examining whatever life may be found will be included. The ship will carry wireless and a seaplane.

Time, apparently, means but little to Arctic explorers, for Captain Bartlett says: "We may be frozen up a year or two," and then goes on to say that such experiences are common to northern explorers and are rather expected.

FIND RELICS ARE 12,000 YEARS OLD

A boy's accidental find of a fissure in the earth in the center of a forest near the River Lot, in the South of France, has been responsible for the discovery of important human relics estimated to be at least 12,000 years old.

This is the second important archaeological find made in France in the past two months, Universal Service having previously detailed the discovery of three skeletons of men who lived 12,000 years ago in the Upper Burgundy district, near Dijon.

The boy, when he found the fissure, divined that it might have archeological importance, so he hurried back and informed Abbe Lebozi, a parish priest, who ventured into the crack and found it led to a huge subterranean domain, divided into spacious chambers which contained the relics.

Drawings made by artists estimated to have lived in the year 10,000 B. C., decorated the walls, and there were crude statues and flint, arrowheads in abundance. Among the drawings are several of fish and two of horses which resemble almost exactly the domestic animal of today. The dog apparently had not then been domesticated, for no canine pictures were found.

ICE IN JUNE AND JULY

Lateness of spring this year and the statement that the sun is sending the earth less heat have led to many comparisons with 1816, "the year without a summer."

Records of the Government department contain a full report on the summer of 1816, repetition of which is feared in some quarters. The mean temperature in Philadelphia, according to records, for April of that year was 47. With a mild beginning, the month terminated with cold and blustering weather.

May had a temperature of 64, which promised a fair season. June was cold, with an average temperature of 64. There was ice and vegetables were injured. Six to ten inches of snow fell in Vermont, three inches in New York and several inches in New Hampshire and Maine.

The average temperature for July was only 68, with freezing weather which formed ice. On the morning of the 5th, ice was reported as thick as window glass in Pennsylvania, New York, and throughout New England.

The mean temperature for August was 66.

Indian corn raised in Pennsylvania sold for seed in the spring of 1817 for \$4 a bushel.

POWERFUL MAGNETS SIFT METAL SCRAPS

The kettles in which "Big French" John boiled his beans, and the hobnails from "Sandy" Bowler's brogans are among the relics of the Comstock being gleaned daily by powerful magnets from ore that was once the shallow soil of the '59 camp of Slippery Gulch, Nev.

From the historic spot on which these two and scores of other famous Nevada characters rose from poverty to riches at the stroke of a pick or the roll of a miner's cradle the huge stamp mill of the United Comstock Mines Company now grinds out the gold they daily drop upon.

With the undemining of the ground on which Mark Twain published his Virginia City *Enterprise* and Dan De Quille wrote his anecdotes of Western mining camps, horseshoes, nails, tin cans, stove lids, anvils and the metal whatnots of the 60's fall into ore-cars and are carried to the mill at American Flat.

In order to protect the machinery powerful magnets sift the metal from the ore.

The gathering scrap heap looks old and rusty but there is an air of romance about it. The tide of humanity that flowed past Slippery Gulch laid the foundations of the wealth that helped build San Francisco, and the same tide of gold and silver floated Nevada into the Union.

HERE AND THERE

CALIFORNIA'S LOFTY MOUNTAINS

At least 60 mountains in California rise more than 13,000 feet above sea level, but they stand amid a wealth of mountain scenery so rich and varied that they are not considered sufficiently noteworthy to be named, according to the United States Geological Survey, Department of the Interior. Yet if any one of these unnamed mountain peaks were in the eastern part of the United States it would be visited annually by millions of people. But California has 70 additional mountain peaks more than 13,000 feet high that have been named or 130 in all, as well as a dozen that rise above 14,000 feet.

SWEET POTATOES MAY BE MADE INTO SYRUP

The question of providing enough food for the increasing number of city dwellers has been a pressing one. So has the problem of conservation of waste products. It is said that some of the big packing companies rely upon the use of their waste by-products for profit. Industrial chemistry has found many uses for waste products in the past generation and has thus succeeded in effecting great savings both in money and the supply of materials and food. The latest step in this direction is the use of small unmarketable sweet potatoes. Government agricultural experts have been endeavoring to interest Southern growers in a plan to convert their waste sweet potatoes into fine brown commercial syrup. Heretofore they have been discarded as waste or have been plowed into the soil for fertilization.

LANGUAGES OF THE WORLD

There are said to be 3,424 spoken languages or dialects in the world, distributed as follows: America, 1,624; Asia, 937; Europe, 587; Africa, 276. The English language is spoken by more than 150,000,000; German by more than 120,000,000; Russian by more than 90,000,000; French by more than 60,000,000; Spanish by more than 55,000,000; Italian by more than 40,000,00, and Portuguese by more than 30,000,000. Although the war has added some words to the English language, the number is less than 10,000. The English contains approximately 700,000 words. Of this total nearly one-half consists of scientific terminology seldom met outside of text books, and of archaic, obsolescent or obsolete terms. As regards the words in the other languages, no estimate of any practical value has been made in recent years, but existing dictionaries show the following facts: The German word book contains not more than 300,000 words, including personal names. Grimm's dictionary of the German language contains approximately 150,000 words; Littré's dictionary of the French language has 210,000 words; Dahl's dictionary of the Russian language has 140,000 words; Carlos de Ochoa's dictionary of the Spanish language contains 120,000 words; Petrocci's dictionary of the Italian language has 140,000 words.

A NEW WONDER

Discovery of a two and a half mile unexplored avenue of wonderful beauty in Mammoth Cave, Kentucky's great natural wonder, has just been made by Carl T. Robertson, Cleveland naturalist and author, according to a reliable report recently.

In company with Schuyler Hunt, veteran guide, the naturalist ventured off the beaten paths in the cave and the discovery of the new avenue came as an accident.

A stir was created by the naturalist's story, and as a result a searching party was organized to explore the avenue thoroughly and also two big avenues which Robertson had noted.

"As a pleasing contrast to the atrociously rough paths we had been traveling for hours," the naturalist said, "the new avenue was as smooth as a dancing floor, but covered with from one to three inches of the finest limestone sand. About 200 feet from the entrance we came to a fairy fountain, a stream of water dropped from an invisible crevice in the roof to an almost circular bowl six or seven feet in diameter, in a ledge about shoulder high above a natural pathway."

ABOUT THE CONDOR

The condor is the largest of the vulture family and the huge bird makes its nest thousands of feet high in the peaks of the Andes Mountains of South America. The male bird is about four feet in length and its wing-spread is from eight to eleven feet or more. The male has a large, fleshy wattle, which forms a crest to the head. Both the female and the male have very powerful beaks, but their claws have not power enough to enable them to carry away heavy bodies. Their food consists largely of animals of the mountain-side that have been killed or that have died.

In North America we have no such vultures, but the turkey buzzard, which is a small relative of the family, inhabits the southern states and Central America. It is black, except its necked red head, and is always on the lookout for dead flesh.

The king vulture's naked neck is colored with shades of orange, purple and crimson and it has extraordinary colored fleshy wattles all around its nostrils and the root of its cruel-looking beak.

The secretary bird is the most peculiar of the vulture family and has curious long, strong legs with stout scales, a long tail and a strong, hooked beak. Its food consists of reptiles and among these is included a great number of venomous serpents. The bird has no fear of them. It usually dashes at the snake and, with its wings spread out towards the front to keep the serpent from biting it, beats it, pecks it and stamps on it until the snake is killed. Small snakes it swallows whole; larger ones it tears to pieces. This bird is generally found in South Africa, where it is so highly valued as the foe of snakes that a fine is imposed for killing it. It gets the name of secretary bird from the feathers which grow out from the back of its head, looking very much like quill pens behind the ear of a clerk.

WONDERFUL STONES

Probably the largest stones ever used in any building are seen in the western wall of the great temple of Baalbek, in Syria, and the problem is still unsolved as to the methods used in conveying them from the quarries and of placing them in position. The quarries from which these blocks were undoubtedly cut can be seen about a half mile to the southwest of the temple. The three stones lie horizontally and form part of the outer wall of the building. They are not on the lowest part of the masonry, but are 23 feet above the first row of stones. Each stone is over 60 feet long, 13 feet high and 10 feet thick.

The most wonderful block of all still lies in the quarries, for something must have occurred to stop the work of separating it completely from the rock, and the great stone has lain there for centuries awaiting completion. This stone is 70 feet long, 14 feet high and 13 feet thick. The three sides and part of the fourth have been beautifully chiseled and are smooth and even.



Some Radio and It's GIVEN AWAY

Say, fellows, I'll tell you how you can get a Radio Set like mine without spending a single penny for it. My set came to me complete, all ready to use, with single slide tuning coil, crystal detector, phone condenser and double Rico heads phones.

No expense for batteries—they're not needed with my set. The set's a dandy—I wouldn't take \$15 for it.

Read what other fellows say about their sets, then send your name to-day to the Home Supply Co., 131 Duane Street, Dept. 366.

They'll tell you how a few minutes of your spare time will bring you a set like mine without costing you a penny.

Here's What the Fellows Say

I have received the "Crystal Set." We get wonderful results. We are 22 miles directly west of Philadelphia. A list of stations received perhaps will be of interest to you: WGH, Schenectady, N. Y.; WEAF, New York; WHAZ, Troy, N. Y.; KDKA, East Pittsburgh; WOO, Philadelphia; WIP, Philadelphia; WFI, Philadelphia.

For a crystal set we think this a wonderful range. When the atmosphere is right we get these stations very clearly, especially the ones in New York State.

Again thanking you for your many favors, I am,

Most sincerely,
R. B. B., Box 182, Paoli, Pa.

Received a Radio Set from your company some time ago, and thought perhaps it would interest you to know that I reach further than the twenty miles the paper stated. The following are the stations which I reach: WOO, Philadelphia, Pa.; WEAF, New York City; WOR, Newark, N. J.; WJZ, Newark, N. J.

Yours respectfully,
H. B. F.

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BE A DETECTIVE. Opportunity for men and women for secret investigation in your district. Write C. T. Ludwig, 521 Westover Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

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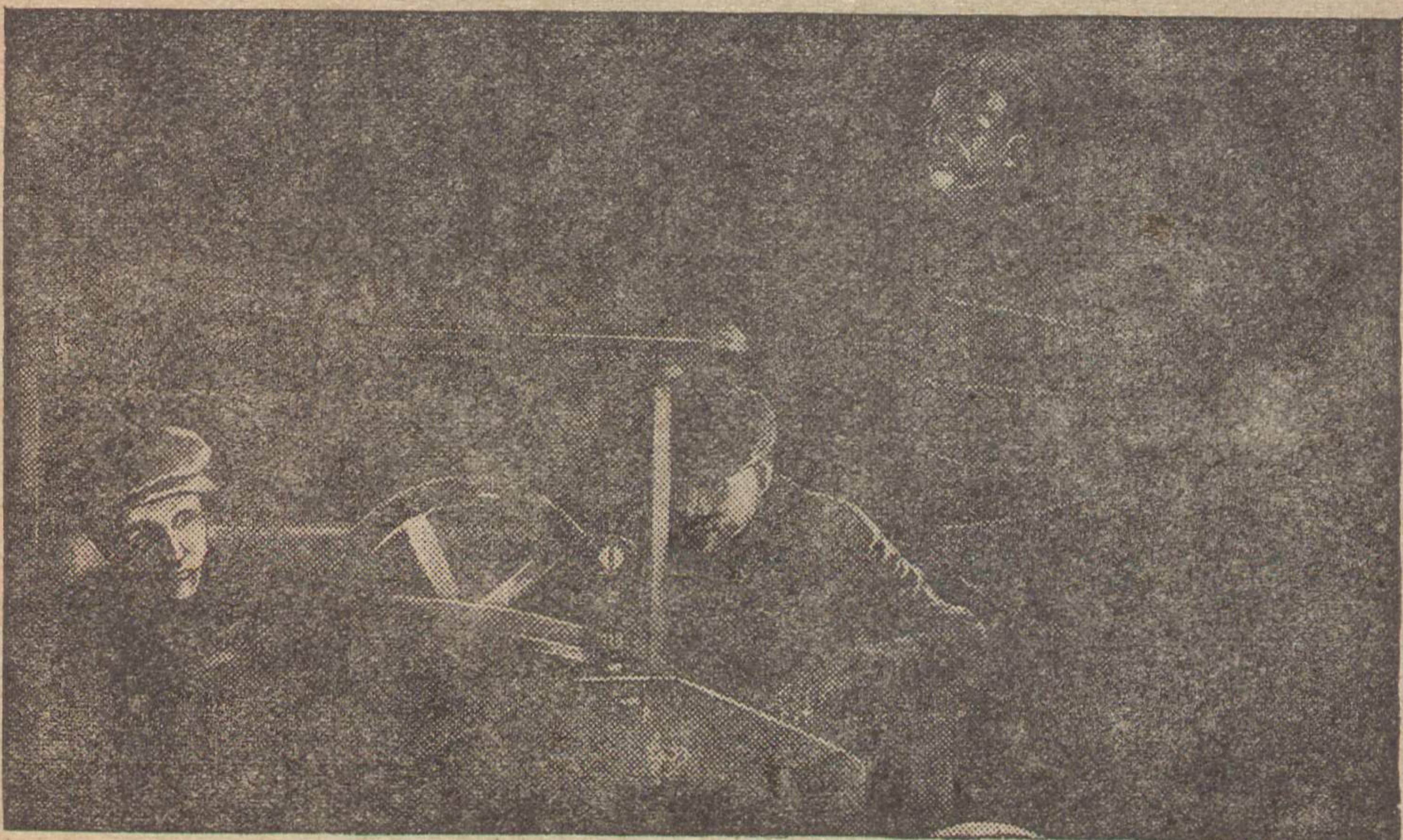
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